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WESTERN, SOUTHERN, AND INTERIOR

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BY

N. W. WRAXALL, Esq.

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THE following sheets, when first published, were annexed to the "Memoirs of the Kings of France "of the Race of Valois," in the year 1776. At the desire of many persons, they are now given to the world separate, with considerable corrections.

Feb. 6th, 1784.

A
TOUR, &c.

Carenten in Low Normandy,
Saturday, 26th Auguſt, 1775.

YOU ſhall be obeyed, my dear Sir; and I prepare myſelf with pleaſure, to give you the ſame minute narration of the events which diverſify my preſent tour, as I did in my laſt round the Baltic.

I landed in this kingdom, at Cherbourg, on Wedneſday evening. The ruins of the pier, which was demoliſhed by our troops in the late war, preſent a mournful picture of devaſtation, as they ſtill remain exactly in the ſtate they were left on the re-embarkation of the Engliſh in 1758. The town itſelf im-

preſſes a ſtranger with no high ideas of opulence or commerce. It is a wretched collection of houſes crouded together in a ſandy valley cloſe to the ſhore; dirty, mean, and irregular. The ſituation alone, in the center of the channel, and between the two Capes of Barfleur and La Hogue, has made it always important in the eye of policy.

If Havre de Grace has been ever eſteemed with reaſon, the key of High Normandy, Cherbourg is equally ſo of the Lower. During the many reigns in which it was ſubject to the Engliſh government, our princes appear to have been ſenſible of its full value. They often landed there, when called over by the revolts of their barons or ſubjects; and we find the Norman princes, who frequently reſided at Wincheſter, uſually embarking for this port, in preference to any other. A very ſtrong garriſon was generally maintained in it; and Charles the ſeventh terminated his long train of victories over the timid and divided counſels of our Henry the ſixth, by this important conqueſt. It was re-annexed to the crown of France in 1450.—I am ſurprized to find that the French miniſtry have never fortified

fortified this city. Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, into whose hands Cherbourg was sequestered in the fifteenth century, surrounded it with walls in the Gothic style of defence, which remained till Louis the fourteenth's reign, who dismantled it, with the intention of fortifying it anew; but the Marquis de Barbesieux, who was then the minister of that prince, found other more pressing calls for the public money, in the wars which opened the present century, and shook his master's throne.

About half a mile from the town is a cliff or rock of prodigious heighth. I ascended it by a long winding path, across the adjoining mountain. On the top I found a little convent of Benedictine monks, or hermits—for so they term themselves—who have chosen to quit the vale below, and having retired to the bleak summit, cultivate a few acres of ground, barren and stony, from which they procure with difficulty a miserable subsistance. One of them, the Superior, after having shewn me the little chapel and refectory, led me to the extreme point of the cliff, on which stands a crucifix. "This," said he, "is the spot,

" from whence John King of England is ſaid
" to have thrown his nephew, prince Arthur
" of Bretagne. Tradition reports, that he
" did it with his own hand, in a tempeſtuous
" night; and that the ſea, which, though
" now at ſome diſtance, then waſhed the foot
" of the rock, received the body of the un-
" happy prince."—You remember, no doubt, this part of the Engliſh hiſtory. It is, however, a very diſputable fact, and there is ſcarce any illuſtrious death the circumſtances of which are leſs aſcertained than that in queſtion. It is certain that prince Arthur, after having been conducted through ſeveral provinces, with ignominy, by his uncle King John, finally diſappeared in 1203.—But ſo far are hiſtorians from poſitively naming the time or manner of his exit, that they diſagree in the place of his confinement, previous to that event; and whether he was impriſoned in the caſtle of Rouen, of Falaiſe, or in that of Cherbourg—for theſe three are all named—cannot preciſely be determined.

There is another veſtige of our Engliſh monarchs yet in being here, which ſtands on inconteſtable authority, and can plead more than

than mere tradition. To the weſtward of the town, about a mile diſtant from it, a little rivulet empties itſelf into the ſea, which is called the "Chantereine." In a meadow, a few paces from the ſhore, ſtands a ſmall chapel, which was built by Matilda, daughter of Henry the firſt, and mother of Henry the ſecond. Hiſtory relates, that in the reign of Stephen, who uſurped the throne, ſhe paſſed over from Wareham into Normandy, to raiſe freſh forces in ſupport of her claim. Being attacked by a violent tempeſt at ſea, ſhe had recourſe to the ſame means which Philip the ſecond uſed at St. Quintin, and Clement the ſeventh at the ſack of Rome, to avert the danger—I mean, prayers. It does not appear that ſhe addreſs'd herſelf to the Deity, or even to Jeſus Chriſt; but, repoſing her whole hope in the Virgin Mary, ſhe made a vow that if ſhe ever ſet her foot again on land, ſhe would ſing a hymn to the Virgin, on the ſpot where ſhe firſt alighted. Her vows were heard; the ſtorm abated, and ſhe arrived happily. The inſtant ſhe got on ſhore, one of the ſailors reminded her of her promiſe, in theſe words, "Chante, reine, "vechi terre!" and as the words were

ſpoken exactly at the mouth of this rivulet, they gave riſe to the name which it retains to this day. Not content with ſo ſmall a mark of her gratitude, ſhe erected the chapel which I have mention'd, and which is called "Notre Dame du Vœu." I went into it. The ſtory is there recorded at length. The architecture bears every mark of extreme rudeneſs and barbariſm, ſuch as characteriſed the age in which it was built. Six centuries, which have elapſed ſince its conſtruction, have looſened the ſtones that compoſe it, and begin to threaten its total demolition. As I went out, I remarked an iron box, apparently coeval with the chapel; and over it, on the wall, in characters almoſt eraſed, was a little inſcription, ſignifying, that it was intended for charitable donations towards repairing "Our Lady du Vœu."

Cherbourg pretends to very high antiquity. It is ſaid to have been originally called Cæſarbourg. Richard the ſecond duke of Normandy, and uncle to William the Conqueror, built a ſtrong caſtle here, and having come in per.on to view it, was ſo pleaſed with the ſituation of the place, and it's importance, as it ap-

peared

peared to him for the defence of his dominions, that he exclaimed in a rapture, "Ly "caftel eft un cher bourg per mi!" This trifling circumftance was the origin of its prefent name. Coins of feveral Roman emperors have been dug up here at different times; and a gentleman fhewed me one, in fine prefervation, of Antoninus Pius, found only a few years fince. Other traditions confirm this fact; and the beautiful "Val-de-Saire," which lies in the eaftern part of the Coutentin, near Cape Barfleur, is faid to be a corruption of "Val-de-Ceres," by which name the Romans called it, in honour of that goddefs, from its extraordinary fertility.

I left Cherbourg yefterday morning, and after dining at Valognes, a confiderable town, arrived here laft night. I would have proceeded for Coutances this morning, but the marriage of Madame Clotilde to the prince of Piedmont has left the provinces without horfes, as they are ordered to Paris, to convey the princefs and her fuite to Turin. I am therefore under the neceffity of ftaying here till to-morrow; and, for want of other amufement, I have wandered over this place, and its environs.

The town is ſmall, but the ruins of the caſtle are very beautiful. It is celebrated in the civil wars under Charles the ninth, and in thoſe of the League which followed, in the reigns of Henry the third and fourth. The architecture of the great church is elegant; it was built in the fifteenth century, when the Gothic ſtructures had almoſt attained to their higheſt point of beauty and perfection. There was nothing in the inſide which merited attention, except an altar, and a painting dedicated to St. Cæcilia. The ſweet ſaint appears playing on a ſort of harpſichord, her fingers running negligently over the keys. A blue mantle looſely buckled over her ſhoulder expoſes part of her neck to view, and her fair hair floats down her back. The balls of her eyes are thrown up to heaven in a fine frenzy of muſical enthuſiaſm.—If there were many ſuch canonized beauties in the Romiſh calendar, it would be a dangerous religion. The heart raiſe altars to them without the aid of piety.

I ſhall continue my remarks as I proceed.

Coutances, Monday, 28th Auguft, 1775.

IT is only fix leagues from Carenten to this city; but the road, even at this feafon of the year, is fo bad, that thofe of Weftphalia and Brandenburgh are fine in comparifon. The roads of Low Normandy are infamous to a proverb; and I fhould never have had the boldnefs to venture through them, if I had before known how bad they were. Coutances has, however, in fome degree, made amends for the difficulties I found in arriving at it, and repaid me by the objects it affords of entertainment. It was founded by the Romans, who eftablifhed a legion here, and called it "Caftra Conftantia." They fortified it with very ftrong walls, which remained till Louis the eleventh's reign; who demolifhed them, becaufe the place, being part of the domain of his brother Charles duke of Normandy, refufed to admit a royal garrifon. It ftands on a hill, the fides of which defcend with prodigious rapidity. Beyond the vale, a range of hills rifes like a fup[illegible] phitheatre, and furrounds it on every fide. The houfes bear all the marks of antiquity in their

ſtructure and taſte, which is rude to the greateſt degree. Many of them have doubtleſs ſtood five or ſix hundred years; and on one, the ſtyle of which merits peculiar attention, is the date 1007 yet remaining in very legible characters.

On the ſummit of the hill, in the center of the town, ſtands the cathedral. I have paſſed ſeveral hours in the examination of its architecture. There is a groteſque beauty ſpread over the whole; and the fantaſtic ornaments of Gothic building are mixed with a wonderful delicacy and elegance in many of its parts. It was begun in 1047; and William the Conqueror, king of England, aſſiſted in perſon at its conſecration ſome years after. I went up to the top of the great center tower, to enjoy one of the fineſt proſpects imaginable. The town of Granville appears in front, and beyond it the little iſlands of Chauſey. Jerſey, at the diſtance of ſeven leagues to the north, forms a noble object. The country on all ſides, towards St. Lo, Avranches, and Carenten, is a garden, rich, cultivated, and ſhaded with woods. They ſay that a certain barbarous monk, named St. Ereptiole, founded this ſee as early as the year 430, in the

reign of the emperor Theodoſius the ſecond; and under the papacy of Celeſtine the firſt.—Henry the fifth, king of England, made himſelf maſter of the city in the year 1418, after a ſhort ſiege; but it returned to the crown of France under the declining power of the houſe of Lancaſter.

Coutances is large, but the convents form a conſiderable part of its ſize, and the monks of different orders, a great part of its inhabitants. As it is ſituated at two leagues diſtant from the ſea, and has not any navigable river, there is no commerce; but ſome few provincial nobleſſe reſide in the place.

I am charmed with the Coutentin: all this part of Low Normandy is ſo called. From Cherbourg to Valognes, it was mountainous and heathy; but in general the country is inferior to no part of the north of Europe. Fine acclivities cloathed with wood, and rich vallies covered with harveſts, form a moſt pleaſing ſcene. There is notwithſtanding an apparent penury in the dwellings of the people. The hand of oppreſſion is viſible in their dreſs, their hovels, and their whole appearance. I ſaw none of thoſe neat and pretty peaſants ſo common in our moſt ſecluded villages.

The Coutentin has given birth to some illustrious men. Those brave and romantic heroes so famous in ancient story, Tancred, and Robert Guiscard, who, after having expelled the Saracens from Apulia and Calabria, founded the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, which they transmitted to their descendants, were Counts of Hauteville, a little town not far from Valognes. History informs us, that Robert duke of Normandy, son to William the Conqueror, the most generous and the most necessitous prince of his age, mortgaged this part of his dominions to his brother Rufus, before he went to the Holy Land. The sum, if I remember right, which he received for it, was only ten thousand marks, which the rapacious Rufus levied on his English subjects.

You see I call in history or tradition to my assistance every moment. Indeed it is impossible to travel through this duchy, where our ancient monarchs so frequently held their residence, without being continually reminded of some of those anecdotes transmitted to us respecting them. Adieu!

In the evening I proceed to Granville.

Granville, Wednefday, 30th Auguft, 1775.

THERE is perhaps no pleafure greater, than that of communicating pleafure received; and, as admiration is one of the moft elegant and interefting fources from which it can be drawn, we ufually liften with extreme readinefs to any addreffes made to that paffion. I wifh to prepare you for a recital, in which the marvellous and the aftonifhing may predominate; though you may do me the juftice to believe, they will ever be under the guidance of truth.

Superftition, the parent of a thoufand evils to mankind, has yet given rife to fuch extraordinary and magnificent productions in every age, as almoft incline one to pardon her crimes and follies. I am juft returned from the furvey of one of thefe; and I fhall endeavour to addrefs my imperfect defcription of it to your heart and affections.

I left Coutances Monday evening. The diftance to this town is only fix leagues, through a continuation of the fame agreeable

country

country which I have already deſcribed. As I was deſirous to viſit the celebrated "Mont "St. Michel," I hired two horſes, and ſet out early yeſterday morning. It is about twenty miles from Granville, and the road lying along the ſea-ſhore, makes it very pleaſant. I got to Genet, a little village, before noon. From thence it is only a league to the Mount; but as the road is entirely acroſs the ſands which are only paſſable at low tide, it becomes indiſpenſibly requiſite to procure a guide. I did ſo, and arrived there at one in the afternoon.

This extraordinary rock—for it is no more, riſes in the middle of the bay of Avranches. Nature has completely fortified one ſide, by its craggy and almoſt perpendicular aſcent, which renders it impracticable for courage or addreſs however conſummate, to ſcale or mount it. The other parts are ſurrounded by walls fenced with ſemilunar towers in the Gothic manner; but ſufficiently ſtrong, added to the advantages of its ſituation, to withſtand any attack. At the foot of the mountain, begins a ſtreet or town, which winds round its baſe to a conſiderable heighth. Above, are chambers

in

in which priſoners of ſtate are confined, and other buildings intended for perſons to reſide in; and on the ſummit is built the abbey itſelf, occupying a prodigious ſpace of ground, and of a ſtrength and ſolidity equal to its enormous ſize, ſince it has withſtood all the ſtorms of Heaven, in this elevated and expoſed ſituation, during many centuries.—I paſſed the whole afternoon in the different parts of the edifice; and as the Swiſs who conducted me through it, found he could not gratify my curioſity too minutely, we left no apartment or chamber unſeen.

The "Sale de Chevalerie," or knights' hall, reminded me of that at Marienbourg in Poliſh Pruſſia. It is equally ſpacious; but more barbarous and rude, becauſe ſome hundred years prior in its conſtruction. Here the knights of St. Michael uſed to meet in ſolemn convocation on important occaſions. They were the defenders and guardians of this mountain and abbey, as thoſe of the temple, and of St. John of Jeruſalem, were of the holy ſepulchre. —At one end is a painting of the archangel, the patron of their order; and in this hall Louis the eleventh firſt inſtituted the order,

and

and invested with the insignia of it the knights of the cross of St. Michael.

We passed on through several lesser rooms into a long passage, on one side of which the Swiss opened a door, and through a narrow entrance, perfectly dark, he led me, by a second door, into an apartment, or dungeon—for it rather merited the latter than the former appellation—in the middle of which stood a cage. It was composed of prodigious wooden bars; and the wicket which admitted persons into it, was ten or twelve inches in thickness. I went into the inside: the space it comprised, was about twelve feet square or fourteen, and it might be nearly twenty feet in heighth. This was the abode of many eminent victims in former ages, whose names and miseries are now forgotten.

"There was," said my conductor, "towards the latter end of the last century, a "compiler of news in Holland, who had presumed to print some very severe reflections "on Madame de Maintenon, and Louis the "fourteenth. Some months afterwards, he "was induced, by a person sent expressly for "that purpose, to make a tour into French

"Flanders.

“ Flanders. The inſtant he had quitted the
“ Dutch dominions, he was put under arreſt,
“ and immediately, by his majeſty's expreſs
“ command, conducted to this place. They
“ ſhut him up in this cage. Here he lived
“ upwards of three-and-twenty years; and
“ here he, at length, expired.——During
“ the long nights of winter,” continued the
man, “ no candle or fire was allowed him,
“ nor was he permitted to have any book.
“ He ſaw no human face except that of the
“ gaoler, who came once every day to preſent
“ him, thro' a hole in the wicket, with his
“ little portion of bread and wine. No in-
“ ſtrument was given him with which he
“ could deſtroy himſelf; but he found means
“ at length to draw out a nail from the wood,
“ with which he cut on the bars of his cage,
“ ſeveral fleurs de lis and coats of arms, the
“ engraving of which formed his only em-
“ ployment and recreation.”—Theſe I ſaw,
and they are indeed very curiouſly performed,
with ſo rude a tool.

As I ſtood within this dreadful engine of cruelty, I execrated the vengeance of the prince, who, for ſo ſlight a treſpaſs could

inflict

inflict ſo diſproportionate and tremendous a puniſhment, and I haſtened out of this ſad apartment, impreſſed with feelings of the deepeſt pity and indignation.

" It is now fifteen years," ſaid the Swiſs, " ſince a gentleman ended his days in that cage; " it was before the time when I came to reſide " here; but there is one inſtance within my " own memory. Monſieur de F——, a perſon " of rank, was conducted here by command " of the late king, and remained three years " ſhut up in it. I fed him myſelf every day; " but he was allowed books and candle to " divert his miſery; and at length, the abbot, " touched with his deplorable calamities, re- " queſted and obtained for him the royal par- " don. He was ſet free, and is now alive in " France.

" The ſubterranean chambers," added he, " in this mountain, are ſo numerous, that we " know them not ourſelves. There are cer- " tain dungeons, called " Oubliettes," into " which they were accuſtomed formerly to " let down malefactors guilty of very heinous " crimes: they provided theſe wretches with " a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine, and

" then

"then they were totally forgotten, and left "to perish by hunger in the dark vaults of "the rock. This punishment has not how-"ever been inflicted by any king in the last "or present century."

We continued our progress through the abbey. He led me into a chamber, in one corner of which was a kind of window; between it and the wall of the building, was a very deep space or hollow of near a hundred feet perpendicular, and at bottom was another window, opening to the sea. It is called "The hole of Montgomeri." The history of it is this.——You may recollect that in the year 1559, Henry the second king of France, was unfortunately killed at a tournament by the Count de Montgomeri. It was not intended on that nobleman's part; and he was forced, contrary to his inclination, to push the lance against his sovereign, by his express command. He was a Hugonot, and having escaped the massacre of Paris, made head against the royal forces in Normandy, being supported by our Elizabeth with arms and money. When driven from his fortresses in those parts, he retired to a rock, called the

"Tombelaine." This is another Mountain, ſimilar to the "Mont St. Michel," only three quarters of a league diſtant from it, and of nearly equal dimenſions. At that time there was a caſtle on it, which was afterwards demoliſhed, and of which ſcarce any traces now remain. From this place of ſecurity, only acceſſible at low tides, he continually made excurſions, and annoyed the enemy, who never dared to attack him. He coined money, laid all the adjacent country under contribution, and rendered himſelf univerſally dreaded. Being deſirous to ſurprize the "Mont "St. Michel," he found means to engage in his intereſts one of the monks reſident in the abbey, who promiſed to give him the ſignal for his enterprize, by diſplaying a handkerchief. The treacherous monk having made the ſignal, betrayed him, and armed all his aſſociates, who waited Montgomeri's arrival. The Count came, attended by fifty choſen ſoldiers, deſperate, and capable of any attempt. They croſſed the ſand, and having placed their ſcaling-ladders, mounted one by one; as they came to the top, they were diſpatched each in turn, without noiſe. Montgomeri, who

followed

followed laſt, at length diſcovered the perfidy, and eſcaped with only two of his men, with whom he regained the "Tombelaine." They preſerve with great care, the ladders and grappling irons uſed on this occaſion.—You perhaps remember the ſubſequent fate of the Count himſelf. He was afterwards beſieged and taken priſoner by the Marechal de Matignon, in 1574, at Domfront in Normandy; and Catherine of Medicis, who deteſted him for his having been, tho' innocently, the cauſe of her huſband's death, ordered him to be immediately executed.

The church itſelf detained me a long time, and is matter of great curioſity. It is ſupported by nine pillars of moſt enormous dimenſions, which ſtand upon the ſolid rock. I did not meaſure them; but, as far as the gloomineſs of the place would admit me to form a judgment, I apprehend that each of them muſt be five-and-twenty feet in circumference: beſides theſe, there are two others, of much inferior ſize, which ſupport the center of the church, over which is the tower. If the prodigious incumbent weight and the nature of the ſituation is conſidered, nothing

leſs

lefs maffy could fuftain the building. They feem as if they were defigned to outlive the ravages of time, and the convulfions of nature.—But before we enter the church itfelf, I muft inform you of the abfurd and legendary caufe which firft produced it.

In the reign of Childebert the fecond, king of France, there was a bifhop of Avranches named St. Aubert. To this holy man, the archangel Michael was pleafed to appear one night, and order him to go to this rock, and there conftruct a church. St. Aubert, who feems to have been a little incredulous, treated it as a dream: the angel came again, repeated his injunction, and not being obeyed, the third time, he, by way of imprinting it on the bifhop's memory, made a hole in his fkull, by touching it with his thumb. In the treafury of the church I faw this curious fkull. It is enclofed in a little fhrine of gold, and a chryftal, which opens over the orifice, gratifies curiofity by the minuteft examination of it. The hole is of a fize and fhape juftly proportioned to the thumb fuppofed to have produced it, and whether it is done with a knife, or by what other means,

I cannot

I cannot determine. The biſhop however, upon this ſenſible mark of the divine pleaſure, delayed no longer; but repairing to the rock, conſtructed a ſmall church, as he had been commanded.—Here fable ends; and true hiſtory, ſupplying its place, informs us, that it was in 966, that Richard the ſecond duke of Normandy began to build the abbey. It was compleated about the year 1070, under William the Conqueror, tho' many other additions were made to it by ſucceeding abbots and princes.

The treaſury is crouded with innumerable relics, among which ſome few have a real and intrinſic value. There is a fine head of Charles the ſixth of France cut in chryſtal, which drew my attention. They have got, Heaven knows by what means, an arm of Edward the Confeſſor; and they ſhewed me another, of "St. Richard, king of England." Who this ſaint and prince was, I confeſs, is beyond my comprehenſion. I am ſure they could not term Richard the firſt ſo, unleſs his cruſade againſt Saladine wiped out all his ſins, and canonized him. Richard the ſecond has no better pretenſions to ſanctity. I do not

mention

mention him who fell at Boſworth; ſo that who this royal ſaint was, I muſt leave you to diſcover. As to the monks, they know nothing about it; but they were poſitive he was a king of England.——An enormous golden cockle-ſhell, weighing many pounds, given by Richard the ſecond duke of Normandy, when he founded the abbey, is worth remarking.

In the middle of the choir hangs a ſtone, which is ſaid to have fallen on the head of Louis the eleventh, at the ſiege of Beſançon, without doing him the ſmalleſt injury. This, he conceived, and with reaſon, muſt have been owing to ſome divine interpoſition; for the ſtone weighs, I ſhould ſuppoſe, at leaſt ten pounds. Louis, though the greateſt monſter who ever filled a throne, was yet, at intervals, exceedingly pious: he uſed to come often in pilgrimage to the "Mont St. "Michel;" and he ordered this ſtone to be ſuſpended by a chain in the choir, and left the income of certain lands for the maintenance of prieſts, who were to ſay maſſes for his preſervation from ſo imminent a danger.

The refectory, the cloiſters, the cells of the

the monks, are all, (or rather they have been) very magnificent, and ſpacious; but a vaſt ſum of money is now wanted to put the whole in repair, and reinſtate what the lapſe of ages defaces and deforms. One of the great towers is cracked and decayed. They have written repeatedly to the miniſtry, to know his majeſty's pleaſure reſpecting it; but no anſwer has been returned. It will probably fall ſoon, and muſt neceſſarily, from its prodigious heighth and ſize, draw with it a conſiderable part of the adjoining buildings.

The late king Louis the fifteenth ſequeſtered the revenues of the abbey, which are very ample. A prior is ſubſtituted inſtead of the abbot, and the number of monks is reduced from thirty to fourteen. Perhaps a few years more may even extinguiſh theſe; and St. Michael himſelf, tho' compoſed of gold, be melted down to ſupport the expence of a bal paré.—It is at preſent conſidered chiefly as a priſon of ſtate, and will probably be repaired more on that account, than from motives of piety, or veneration for its religious origin. The apartments are at this time occupied by many illuſtrious

prifoners, who have been fent here by "Lettre "de cachet," for crimes of ftate. They are detained in more ftrict or eafy confinement, according to the royal mandate. There are at prefent, eight in one range of rooms, who eat at the fame table together. They are allowed each a pint of wine; but neither knives or forks are ever given them, left they fhould commit fuicide, to efcape the horrors of imprifonment. No perfon is permitted to enter that divifion of the abbey in which they live, or can hold any converfation with them. Four of thefe were fent here fince the acceffion of his prefent majefty. There are others who have the liberty of going into every part of the Mount without reftraint; but to enjoy this permiffion they muft be habited as priefts, and of confequence be known to every one. To efcape, feems almoft impoffible—but what cannot human fubtlety effect, when pufhed to defpair? It is only fixteen days fince a Monfieur de C——, who had been confined ten months, fucceeded in an attempt to liberate himfelf. I was fhewn the place from whence he let himfelf down by a rope: it is near a hundred feet perpendicular. He croffed the

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ſands immediately, while the ſea was low; and it is imagined he has embarked either for Jerſey or for England, as no intelligence has been received concerning him.

Some apartments are deſtined to a ſpecies of wretches yet more deplorable—I mean, to lunatics. There are ſeveral here who are of high rank. In the cloiſters of the abbey, a perſon accoſted me in very polite terms. He appeared to be above fifty years of age; his dreſs was mean, and at his button-hole hung a croſs of the order of St. Michael, fantaſtically adorned with ribbands. His face, tho' brown and ſickly, was noble, commanding, and engaging; his hair, of a deep black, mixed with grey, hung floating upon his ſhoulders; and over his whole perſon was an air of dignity in ruin. It was the Marquis de R—, a nobleman of Bretagne, who has been ſhut up here five-and-twenty years. He is inſane, but harmleſs, and obſerves perfectly all the forms of politeneſs and good breeding.——None but perſons of quality are ever ſent here on this account.

I thought the age of pilgrimages had been nearly at an end in all European nations, and

that devotion was now content with venerating its ſaints at home—but will you believe it, when I aſſure you, that the number of pilgrims who come annually to pay their vows to St. Michael at this Mount, amounts to between eight and ten thouſand? They are moſtly peaſants, and perſons in mean occupations; but even among the nobility there are not wanting thoſe who are induced to make this journey from principles of piety. The little town at the foot of the Mount is ſometimes ſo crowded with them, that not a bed is to be procured. I ſaw at leaſt ſix when I was there. They were all young men and women. Their dreſs exactly correſponded with our ideas of them, as drawn from ancient ballads. Their hats were laced with cockle-ſhells round the edges, and on the crown was a gilt coronet, above which was the croſs. A ribband in the ſame form was tied acroſs their breaſt; and all over their cloaths were placed little images of St. Michael vanquiſhing the devil. I aſked them, from whence they came? they ſaid, from Champagne; a very conſiderable diſtance, acroſs all France. I put ſeveral queſtions to them, and they would

would willingly have followed me when I went up to the top of the ſteeple; but the Swiſs, who was well accuſtomed to ſee theſe poor devotees arrive, repulſed them very roughly. "Que "diable!" ſays he, "allez, prier le bon Saint "Michel, ſi vous voulez! Je ne conduis pas le "menu peuple!" The poor pilgrims retired immediately, without a word.—It is ſaid, that the late Dauphin, father of the preſent king, was here incognito, about nineteen or twenty years ago; and the old man who conducted me acroſs the ſands, aſſured me that he had the honour to be his royal highneſs's guide, without knowing at the time his rank. The character of the Dauphin was that of a bigot, and I am not at all ſurprized at ſuch a proof of it.——Near the foot of the mountain, cloſe to the waves of the ſea, is a very fine well of freſh water; but as it might and would be undoubtedly taken poſſeſſion of by an enemy in caſe of a ſiege, they have contrived to form ciſterns in the ſolid rock, proportionate to every other part of the building, and capable of containing many hundred tuns of water; they ſay, more than twelve hundred. Indeed, to beſiege the mountain, would be an act of madneſs; as a hundred

men might defend it againſt ten thouſand aſſailants, and any number of veſſels; nor could it be, if taken, converted to any ſort of national benefit.

The town itſelf is almoſt as much an object of curioſity as any other part of the Mount. I doubt not that there are many houſes in it above five or ſix hundred years old; and I did not ſee one which ſeemed to be built ſince the time of Louis the eleventh. The whole number of perſons reſident in the abbey and in the town, does not exceed a hundred and eighty, in time of peace. A militia, compoſed of the inhabitants, mounts guard, to prevent any of the priſoners from eſcaping. In time of war there are five hundred ſoldiers commonly in garriſon; and they aſſured me, ſo large and numerous are the chambers in different parts of the abbey, that thirteen thouſand troops might be diſpoſed of there without any ſort of inconvenience, or difficulty.

They ſell little legendary books in the town, and I have bought them all, in hopes to find ſome hiſtorical anecdotes or traditions reſpecting the place, and the various important

events

events or ſieges it has undergone ;—but alas! this is a vain attempt. They are all ſtuffed with miracles and abſurdities, too ridiculous to repeat; and St. Michael and St. Aubert are the only heroes who make any figure in theſe annals. I would moſt willingly have inſpected the archives which are laid up in the abbey; but this gratification is not permitted to ſtrangers. It muſt be a very curious reſearch, ſince it is probable that every king of England from William the Conqueror down to Henry the third, muſt have been many times here from motives of devotion or curioſity.

In the year 1090, Robert duke of Normandy, and William Rufus king of England, ſons of William the Conqueror, beſieged their younger brother Henry a long time in the "Mont St. Michel." It muſt be preſumed that they were maſters of the foot of the rock; for otherwiſe it would be impracticable to inveſt it. The prince could never have been reduced to ſurrender from force; but he was in want of water, and from that neceſſity was on the point of yielding up the fortreſs, when Robert, with the benevolence and generoſity which marked his character,

ſent him ſome pipes of wine; and this ſuccour, (like that which Henry the fourth permitted his troops to give the Pariſians,) enabled Henry to hold out. Rufus reproached Robert for his conduct; "Shall we then," ſaid he, "ſuffer our brother to die of thirſt?"—And what return did he meet with from Henry? An impriſonment of twenty-eight years in a vaulted chamber of Cardiff caſtle, where he expired.

I fear I have tired you with ſo minute a deſcription of the mountain. I left it this morning, and, being conducted by the ſame guide acroſs the ſands, reached the village of Genet at ten. Numbers of people are drowned every year in paſſing this place. The ſea comes in with a rapidity beyond any idea you can form of it, and frequently intercepts unhappy travellers, who preſume to venture without a guide. I ſaw, in the church-yard of Genet, a grave where five perſons were buried, who periſhed as they attempted to paſs within theſe few days, and ſimilar accidents are common.—It was noon when I returned to Granville, my fancy entirely occupied with the extraordinary ſcenes

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to which I had been a witneſs, and which I have endeavoured to deſcribe to you without ſtudy or arrangement.

This town is ſituated very pleaſantly on a neck of land ſtretching into the ſea. It is not ſmall; but the buildings are ſcattered, mean, and irregular, extending near a mile from one extremity to the other, part on the rock above, and part in the vale below.—It is open to the ſea, there being no bay, tho' they have conſtructed part of a pier to ſhelter and protect the ſhipping. Some ſmall redoubts and batteries have likewiſe been erected during the late war, on the eminences round the place, to defend it from invaſion; but they are of no ſtrength.

It is time to conclude this long letter. My next will probably be written from ſome part of Bretagne. Adieu!

Yours, &c.

St. Malo, Tuesday, 4th September, 1775.

I Arrived here yesterday morning. It was very late Saturday night when I reached Avranches; and had I been a Roman Catholic, I should certainly have put both myself and my carriage under the protection of the Virgin, or of some saint who is the tutelary patron of travellers, before I adventured into these perilous roads. The chaise once stuck fast for near an hour, and I was obliged to employ a dozen peasants, who with the help of pick-axes, and with infinite labour, at length lifted it up by main strength.

Avranches detained me a few hours. The city is the meanest I have yet seen in France, but its situation is very fine. The cathedral stands on a hill, which terminates abruptly, the front of the church extending to the extreme verge of it, and overhanging the precipice. It bears the marks of high antiquity, but the towers are decayed in many places, tho' its original construction has been wonderfully strong. While I stood near it, one of the priests

priefts very politely accofted me, and offer'd, as I appeared to be a ftranger, to give me fome information refpecting it.

" The cathedral," faid he, " has been the " work of different ages; but the two wef- " tern towers are fuppofed to be as old as the " eighth century, the bifhopric itfelf having " been founded about the year 400. One of " the Englifh kings, Henry the fecond, re- " ceived abfolution here from the Papal " Nuncio, for the murder of St. Thomas- " à-Becket, in 1172, and the ftone on which " he knelt during the performance of that " folemn ceremony, ftill exifts." He carried me to look at the ftone. Its length is about thirty inches, and the breadth twelve. It ftands before the north portal, and on it is engraved a chalice in commemoration of the event.

The ruins of the caftle of Avranches are very extenfive, and beneath lies a rich extent of country, covered with orchards, and abounding in grain.

I continued my journey on Sunday at noon, and quitting Normandy, reached the city of Dol in Bretagne the fame evening. At Pon-

torſon the two provinces are ſeparated by the little river Coeſnon, which forms the boundary.—Dol muſt detain every perſon who has any veneration for the remains of antiquity. Except the epiſcopal palace, which is an elegant modern building, there is not a houſe within the walls, which does not ſeem to have been built in ages the moſt barbarous and remote. The fortifications are in the ſame ſtyle, and appear to have been antiently very formidable. Hiſtory confirms this ſuppoſition. William the Conqueror twice laid ſiege to Dol, and was twice repulſed. In 1075, Philip king of France forced him to make a haſty retreat into Normandy; and when he again attempted to make himſelf maſter of it in 1085, Alain duke of Bretagne obliged him to retire with ſome diſgrace. Henry the ſecond, more ſucceſsful, carried Dol by ſtorm in 1173.

It was a beautiful autumnal evening, and I walked near half a league from the town to view a ſingular object of curioſity. In the middle of a very large orchard ſtands a ſingle ſtone, between forty and fifty feet high: its circumference near the baſe equals its heighth, and the form is circular and conical. It is called

"La

" La Pierre du champ dolent."—" The ſtone " of the field of lamentation." There are no certain accounts when, or on what occaſion it was erected; but the traditions relative to it are equally numerous and contradictory. I had the pleaſure to ſee and converſe with the gentleman on whoſe eſtate it is ſituated. He ſaid, the moſt approved opinion was, that Julius Cæſar had cauſed it to be erected as a trophy to mark the extent of his conqueſts, after a bloody engagement which he gained over the inhabitants of Armorica. The peaſants are fully perſuaded that the devil ſet it up in one of his idle hours; " but," added he, " I have myſelf cauſed the " earth to be removed round its baſe to the diſ- " tance of forty feet on every ſide; and I find " that it joins to a prodigious rock, from " which it ſeems to have ſprung; ſo that I " am induced to think, notwithſtanding its " name, that it may be a natural production." However cauſed, it is very extraordinary, and deſerves an attentive inveſtigation.

I got to this city yeſterday. The caſtle of St. Malo was built by the celebrated Anne of Bretagne, who annexed the duchy to the crown

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of France by her marriage with Charles the eighth in 1489. She was aſked by the engineer who conſtructed it, what plan ſhe would chooſe as its model. "My coach," ſaid ſhe. It is ſo in effect. A large ſquare area within, conſtitutes the body; two ſmall towers in the fore-part anſwer to the fore-wheels of a carriage, as two others of a larger ſize do to the hinder ones; a projection in front forms the pole, and an arched nich behind correſponds to the place where the ſervant was uſed to ſtand. Conſcious that poſterity might accuſe her of caprice and abſurdity, ſhe has obviated their criticiſms in a manner truly royal, by an inſcription engraved on the wall, and very legible at this hour—

"Qui que gronde, tel eſt mon plaiſir!"

You will allow this to be the reaſoning of a ſovereign.

St. Malo is ſituated in an iſland joined to the continent by a cauſeway. The ancient city and biſhopric were half a league diſtant, upon the main-land; but in the year 1172, the biſhop, John de la Grille removed his reſidence

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to the little iſland of St. Aaron, and began the town which now exiſts. The houſes are all lofty and elegant; but the ſtreets, owing to the want of ground and to the number of inhabitants, are narrow, dirty, and ill pierced.

To-morrow I proceed to Rennes.

Nantes, Saturday, 16th September, 1775.

I Left St. Malo laſt Thurſday ſe'nnight, and lay at Hedé, a little town ſituated on the ſummit of a mountain, which commands a moſt extenſive proſpect. I got to the city of Rennes next morning. Here I had flattered myſelf with the pleaſure of ſeeing the celebrated Monſieur de la Chalotais, who, after having ſuffered, under Louis the fifteenth, all the puniſhments which deſpotiſm can inflict, is now returned to paſs the little remainder of his days in his native province of Bretagne. I had received very particular letters to introduce me to his acquaintance; but he was gone to his ſeat at Caradeuc, the preceding day. To the honour of his preſent majeſty and of the miniſtry, they have endeavoured to make him every poſſible compenſation for the cruel indignities which he met with under the late reign. The king has preſented him with three hundred thouſand livres, beſides a penſion. He is reſtored to his place of "Procureur general au parlement;" and his eſtate of Caradeuc is to be erected into a marquiſate.

I ſtaid

I ſtaid near two days at Rennes. It is the honorary capital of Bretagne, becauſe the ſtates are aſſembled there; but like all cities deſtitute of commerce, is dull and poor. Several of the principal ſtreets are however very handſome, a fire which happen'd in the year 1720, and which almoſt reduced the whole place to aſhes, having obliged the inhabitants to rebuild them with great regularity. In one of the ſquares, is a fine bronze ſtatue of Louis the fifteenth, which was erected by the province in 1744, ſoon after his recovery from that dangerous illneſs in Flanders, which obtained him the title of "Bien aimé. Under the figure of the prince appears on one ſide Hygeia, the goddeſs of health, with her ſerpent and patera; and on the other, is the genius of Bretagne, kneeling on one knee, exultation and reverence finely marked in her countenance. At the foot of the pedeſtal is an inſcription in Latin. I bluſhed as I read it, for the monarch to whom it was offered. He lived, like his predeceſſor, to ſee all theſe marks of public approbation ceaſe; and, loſt to greatneſs and glory in the arms of his miſtreſſes, a dark cloud obſcured the evening of

of a reign, which he had opened with ſome applauſe.

Rennes is ſituate on the little river Vilaine, and was anciently very ſtrongly fortified, but the walls are now in ruins, and the ditch nearly filled up. The ſiege of the city by Edward the third king of England, is very celebrated in hiſtory. The Engliſh and Breton army conſiſted of forty thouſand men; and nevertheleſs, after having remained before it ſix months, were obliged to retire without ſucceſs.

I arrived here on Monday laſt. Nantes is a noble city, and its ſituation is equally advantageous and agreeable, being built on the eaſy declivity of a hill, deſcending on every ſide to the river. The Loire itſelf may almoſt vie with the Thames. Exactly oppoſite to the ſpot on which ſtands the town, it s divided into ſeveral channels, by a number of ſmall iſlands, moſt of which are covered with elegant houſes. The great quay is more than a mile in length; the buildings very ſuperb, and chiefly erected ſince the late peace, in 1763. As its commerce is annually encreaſing the city is conſequently in a ſtate of continual

tinual improvement, and advance in beauty. The Loire is notwithſtanding very ſhallow; and all goods are brought up in large boats from Painbeuf, which is nine leagues diſtant, near the mouth of the river, and at which place veſſels of burden are obliged to unload. At the eaſtern extremity of the town ſtands the caſtle, in which the ancient dukes of Bretagne held their reſidence. It was built about the year 1000; but the duke of Mercœur, who during the long wars of the League, in the ſixteenth century, rendered himſelf in ſome degree ſovereign of this province, made ſeveral conſiderable additions to it. In the chapel, Anne, ducheſs of Bretagne, and widow of Charles the eighth, married Louis the twelfth in 1499; and by this ſecond union, confirmed the duchy to the crown of France. They ſhowed me the chamber in which the celebrated Cardinal de Retz was confined by order of Anne of Auſtria, and from which he made his eſcape by letting himſelf down with a rope into a boat, which waited for him on the Loire.

Many of the ancient dukes of Bretagne are interred in the different churches of the city. The moſt ſplendid of all the monuments erected

to their memory, is that of Francis the ſecond, who was the laſt of them. It is in the "Egliſe des Carmes," and was raiſed by filial duty. His daughter Anne cauſed it to be conſtructed, while ſhe was queen of France. Michael Columb, a Breton by birth, was the artiſt; and it muſt be confeſſed to be a maſter-piece of ſculpture. The tomb is as magnificent as any of thoſe in the abby of St. Denis; and not content with this proof of her attachment to her father's memory, Anne ordered her own heart to be depoſited within a golden box, in the ſame vault.—The inſcription near the tomb, is very curious. It relates that Francis the ſecond, after having been married ſeven years to his firſt wife without iſſue, as his laſt reſource, made a vow to the Virgin Mary, that if by her power or interceſſion he obtained a child, he would dedicate to her an image of his own weight in gold. The holy Virgin, whether moved by the prodigious value of the preſent, or whether touched with pity, heard the prayer very favourably. The duke had a ſon, and performed his vow; tho' exigencies of ſtate obliged him ſome years afterwards to retract the

princely

princely donation he had made.—By his ſecond wife Margaret de Foix, he became father to the princeſs Anne, afterwards queen of France.

Nantes was anciently, like almoſt every conſiderable city in Europe, very ſtrongly fortified. Peter de Dreux, one of the dukes of Bretagne, ſurrounded it with walls, which have only been demoliſhed within theſe few years. The bridge is an object of curioſity. It is near a mile and a half in length, being continued acroſs all the little iſlands in the Loire, from north to ſouth. There are two other ſmaller rivers, which unite at this city, one of which is called the Erdre. I went up this river about two leagues yeſterday, to a gentleman's Chateau, where I dined. The Meander, ſo famous in Grecian fable, can hardly exceed the Erdre in beauty. It winds between groves of cheſnut, oak, and poplar, which cover the banks to the edge of the water, and which are only broken by vineyards, gardens, and elegant villas. About half way, are the ruins of a celebrated fortreſs, formerly poſſeſſed by the Hugonots, called the caſtle "de la Verriere;" and at the diſtance of a mile from the houſe where I paſſed the day,

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is an ancient manſion ſurrounded with thick woods, which belonged to Peter Landais, the famous and unworthy favourite of Francis the ſecond.

Bretagne is by no means ſo fertile or ſo cultivated a province as Normandy. The interior part is chiefly open and heathy, but the ſea-coaſts are more populous, and richer in ſoil. Round this city, and to the ſouthward, in the "Pays de Retz," vines are very plentiful, and they make a thin, ſour wine, known by the name of "Vin Nan-"tois."——If we compare the preſent condition of Bretagne, as conſtituting a part of the kingdom of France, with its ancient one as an independent government, there can be no doubt that the change which incorporated it with the monarchy, was the moſt ſalutary and happy to be conceived. While under the dominion of their native princes, the duchy was a ſcene of continual war, bloodſhed, and devaſtation. The dukes of Normandy, or kings of France, were ever aiming at its reduction, and the former effected it more than once. The inteſtine commotions which were raiſed by the oppoſite pretenſions of John de Montfort and Charles of Blois, in

the fourteenth century, left the miferable country unpeopled, defolate, and a prey to the moft fevere famine. Louis the eleventh firft open'd the way for its re-union to the crown. The lady of Beaujeu, left regent at his death, purfued her father's meafures with vigour; and the narrow, parfimonious character and conduct of our Henry the feventh, whofe avarice prevented him from lending any effectual fuccour to Francis the fecond or his daughter Anne, confpired to complete this important acquifition. ——I do not recollect many very eminent perfons, whom this duchy has produced. Bertrand du Guefclin, Conftable of France, and fo renowned in the wars of Edward the third and the Black Prince, was a native of Bretagne; and Abelard, Heloife's unhappy lover, too well known by his amours and his misfortunes, was born at a village called Le Palet, only ten or twelve miles from Nantes, near the borders of Poictou. He lived in the twelfth century, under the reign of Conan the third, duke of Bretagne.

The origin of Nantes is very uncertain, and is carried back into remote antiquity. The Romans doubtlefs had a ftation here. In

In the year 1580, among the ruins of a tower demolished at that time, was found a stone, which, by order of the magistrates, was transferred in 1606 to the "Hotel de Ville." The inscription on it has greatly exercised the attention of antiquaries. It is very legible, and in Roman characters. I transcribed it myself.

"Numinib: Augustor:
"Deo: Vol: Jano.
"M: Gemel: Secundus. et C. Sedat: Florus.
"Actor: Vicanor. Portent. Tribunal. C. M.
"Locis ex Stipe conlata posuerunt."

I cannot forbear mentioning to you one other monument equally singular. Near a bridge which crosses the Loire, called "Le "Pont de la belle Croix," is a stone fixed in the wall, with the remains of a defaced inscription on it. It was placed there to mark the spot where Gilles, Marechal de Retz was burnt, under the reign of Charles the seventh, and, as I think, about the year 1440. This nobleman was accused of, and condemned to die, for crimes, which were said to be too horrible and flagitious ever to be mentioned. They were

were never divulged, but covered up in darkneſs and myſtery. A very ingenious man, to whom I am indebted for almoſt all the information I have gained here, aſſured me that the Marechal de Retz's trial is yet preſerved among the archives of the city; but that it has never been opened, from the ſame motives of horror and caution, which originally actuated his judges. I muſt confeſs that this whole ſtory appears to me very extraordinary.

The environs of Nantes are agreeable; and I ſhould be tempted to make a longer ſtay here, if the advanced ſeaſon did not compel me to haſten my journey.——I ſhall ſet out in two hours for Rochelle. Whether I ſhall purſue my route to Bourdeaux, through Saintonge, or make an excurſion by Poitiers and Angouleſme, I do not yet know; you ſhall hear of me as I proceed.

Rochelle, Wednesday, 20th Sept. 1775.

I SLEPT at Aigrefeille last Saturday night, a little village on the confines of Bretagne, and breakfasted next morning at Montague, the first town in Poictou. I continued my journey the whole day through that province, and arrived, as the sun set, at Moreille. The evening was uncommonly beautiful, and I should have proceeded some miles farther, if a very large convent, which stood opposite to the post-house, in one of the finest situations to be conceived, had not seemed to invite my attention. I ordered horses for the next morning, and walked up to look at the monastery. The great gates were open, and admitted me into a spacious court, or lawn, in front of the building. Here I met the Prior: he was a thin, spare figure, in appearance past his fiftieth year, if his dress did not tend to deceive my judgment. He accosted me with extreme politeness; and, on my informing him that I was a traveller, induced by curiosity to visit his convent, he conducted me into the church, and through the apartments. "We

"are," said he, "of the Cistercian order, and owe our foundation to Eleanor, queen of England, and wife to Henry the second: but during the unhappy wars of the League, the chief scene of which lay in this part of the kingdom, our archives were all carried away, and the building itself defaced, by the soldiers of Coligni."
——When we had finished our view of it, he insisted on my company at supper. Our repast was served up with great elegance, and followed by a desert from the gardens of the priory, which were very extensive. I staid till near midnight, and left my generous host with the utmost regret.

I got to Marans, Monday morning. It is a miserable town, situate on the river Sevre, which divides Poictou from the "Pays d'Aunis." At a small distance from the place, on the bank of the river, towards its mouth, tradition yet points out the spot rendered celebrated by the interview of Louis the eleventh of France, and his brother Charles, duke of Guyenne. The artful monarch exhausted in vain all his treacherous policy to gain his brother; and their interview, like most others

between princes, was unaccompanied with any ſalutary, or beneficial effect.

It is only twenty miles from Marans to Rochelle, through a rich country, covered with vines. This city, ſo famous in the ſixteenth and ſeventeenth centuries—the refuge at that time of the Hugonots, and their grand barrier againſt the royal power—is ſtill a commercial and populous place, tho' much declined from it's antient luſtre. The port, tho' it does not admit veſſels of any conſiderable burthen, is yet well calculated for trade. It may be divided into three parts; the baſon, which is the innermoſt of theſe, is only a quarter of a mile in circumference; and at the entrance are two very noble Gothic towers, called the "Tour de "St. Nicolas," and the "Tour de la Chaine." They are now in a ſtate of decay, but were anciently deſigned to protect the town and harbour. Without theſe towers, is the "Avant "Port," extending more than a league, and bounded by two points of land, to the north and ſouth. Beyond all, is the road, where the largeſt ſhips uſually anchor, protected from the ſouth-weſt winds by the iſlands of Ré, Oleron, and Aix. Previous to the ceſſion of Canada

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to England, and of New Orleans to the crown of Spain, the trade of Rochelle was very lucrative. It has again revived within these two laſt years, to the coaſt of Guinea, and the Eaſt Indies.

This place cannot lay claim to any remote antiquity. It was only a little collection of houſes on the ſhore, inhabited by fiſhermen, when William the ninth, laſt Count of Poictou, rendered himſelf maſter of it in 1139. From that prince it deſcended to his only daughter Eleanor, who, after her divorce from Louis the ſeventh of France, brought all her ample dowry in marriage to Henry the ſecond of England.

Louis tranſgreſſed every rule of true policy, in ſuffering ſo great a princeſs to carry her poſſeſſions into the family of his vaſſal Henry, already too powerful. The charter of Eleanor, incorporating the town of La Rochelle, yet ſubſiſts, in the regiſters of the city. She granted them many peculiar privileges, which her ſon Richard the firſt afterwards confirmed. Under John, the Engliſh affairs declined; and though St. Louis, actuated by ſcruples of honour and conſcience, reſtored to Henry the

third all Saintonge, and Aunis, yet his ſon, Philip the Bold, re-conquered them again ſome years after. The battle of Poitiers, under Edward the third, in 1356, was followed by the ſurrender of all the adjoining provinces and cities to England. Rochelle conſtituted part of the dominions given to the Black Prince by his father; but his reign was very ſhort, and he lived to ſee them again re-united to France by Charles the fifth, in the latter years of Edward's reign.

The Reformed religion, which was firſt introduced into the kingdom about 1540, met with a moſt favourable reception here; and this city became, under Charles the ninth, the grand aſylum of the Proteſtants. The maſſacre of Paris was followed ſoon after by the memorable ſiege of Rochelle, which began in November 1572, and was raiſed in June 1573. Enthuſiaſm ſupplied the beſieged with conſtancy and courage, which rendered them ſuperior to the aſſailants; and the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry the third, who commanded the royal army, was happy to find a pretext in his election to the crown of Poland, for withdrawing his ſhattered troops, after having loſt twenty-two thouſand

thousand men before the place. This success conduced towards inspiring them with resolution to withstand Louis the thirteenth, in 1627; but Richlieu's daring genius was not to be awed into any submission. After having precluded every source of assistance by sea and land, and having invested the place for thirteen months, it surrendered to the mercy of the king. The calamities which the garrison endured from famine, are only to be compared with those of Jerusalem under Titus, and perhaps even exceeded them. It was the last effort of religious opposition, and the æra which established an unlimited royal power throughout the kingdom.

I went twice yesterday, to view the celebrated mound erected by Richlieu. When the sea retires, it is still visible; and I walked out upon it above three hundred feet. It extends from side to side, across the whole harbour, nearly an English mile in length. Its breadth is, at this time, more than one hundred and fifty feet, and it widens continually towards the base. No effort of art or power can possibly impress the mind with so vast and sublime an idea of the genius of Richlieu, as does this bulwark against the sea. While

I ſtood upon it, in the middle of the port, between the waves which rolled on either ſide, and contemplated its extent and ſtrength, I was almoſt inclined to ſuppoſe this aſtoniſhing work to be ſuperior to human power, and the production rather of a deity than of a mortal. A ſmall opening of about two hundred feet, was left by Pompey Targon, the architect who conſtructed it, to give entrance to veſſels, and ſhut up by chains fixed acroſs it. A tower was likewiſe erected at each end, no remains of which are now to be ſeen. Neither the duke of Buckingham, or the earl of Lindſey, who were ſucceſſively ſent from England to the aid of the beſieged by Charles the firſt, dared to attack this formidable barrier; they retired, and left Rochelle to its fate. In all probability, a thouſand years, aided by ſtorms, and all the fury of the ſea, will make little or no impreſſion on this mound, which is deſigned to endure as long as the fame of the Cardinal, it's author.

From the northern point of the harbour, is a fine view of the three iſlands, Ré, Oleron, and Aix. It was on the former of theſe, that the duke of Buckingham landed, and, after his fruitleſs attempt on the citadel of St. Martin,

was repulſed with the loſs of eight thouſand men. This little iſland, which is only ſix leagues in length, is ſeparated from the main land by a channel of three miles broad. It contains, I am aſſured, twenty thouſand inhabitants, and is better cultivated than the fineſt province of France; while Oleron, which is more than double its ſize, has not near that number of people, and is neither in the ſame ſtate of cultivation or improvement. This contraſt is the reſult of their different political immunities, the iſland of Ré being free, and exempt from all duties or taxation.

On the ſouthern ſide of the port ſtands a convent of Minims, erected by Louis the thirteenth, after the ſiege in 1628, to pray for the ſouls of thoſe who periſhed before La Rochelle. When Charles the ninth began to inveſt it in 1572, there were at that time, ſeventy-two thouſand perſons in the city. In the ſecond ſiege, they had diminiſhed to twenty-eight thouſand; and at preſent, the inhabitants are only between ſeventeen and eighteen thouſand; of which ſcarce two thouſand are Hugonots.—Religious zeal and animoſity have entirely ſubſided; the citizens are eſteemed to be as well

attached to the crown as any in France; and Louis the fifteenth permitted the inſcriptions engraved on copper, and affixed by Richlieu on either ſide the doors of the monaſtery I mentioned, to be taken down a few years ſince, ſolemnly broken, and thrown into the ſea.——I purpoſe to leave Rochelle to-morrow, and ſhall take the road to Rochfort and Saintes.

A gentleman with whom I ſupped laſt night, aſſured me that the family of d'Olbreuſe ſtill exiſts, and that they reſide near Chateauneuf upon the Charente, in the province of Angoumois. He added, that their circumſtances were narrow almoſt to diſtreſs. You will ſurely recollect, that this houſe is allied to the blood royal of England. George-William the laſt duke of Zell, married Mademoiſelle d'Olbreuſe, at Breda, about the middle of the laſt century. They had only one daughter, the beautiful and unhappy Sophia, ſo well known for her confinement and misfortunes, and mother to his late majeſty, George the ſecond.

The weather here is the moſt ſerene and delightful that can be imagined. The vintage is already begun round the city, and the peaſants

ſants are engaged in all that happy feſtivity natural to the ſeaſon and the employment. I ſhall have the pleaſure of ſeeing this ſcene continued to the foot of the Pyrenees, as they do not begin their vintage in Guyenne and Gaſcony till the middle or end of October.

This is a long, hiſtorical letter. It is time to finiſh it, and ſubſcribe myſelf, &c. &c.

Saintes, Sunday, September 24th, 1775.

THE diſtance from Rochelle to Rochfort is ſeven leagues, the firſt four of which are exceedingly pleaſant, the road lying along the ſea-ſhore, and in view of the iſlands of Oleron and Aix, which appear at a ſmall diſtance. It is now almoſt a century ſince Louis the fourteenth conſtructed Rochfort, and the city is built in the midſt of marſhes, which were expreſsly drained for that purpoſe. Colbert was then the firſt miniſter, and it is ſaid, he uſed to call it "La Ville d'Or," from the prodigious ſums his maſter had expended there. Time has however evinced the utility of the project, and the port is become as neceſſary and important to the crown of France, as either Breſt or Toulon. It is ſituated on the river Charente, about five leagues from its mouth. I paſſed ſeveral hours, on Friday morning, in the different magazines and dock-yards. Every thing appears to be under admirable regulation, and the ſeveral branches of naval equipment are carried on with the utmoſt vigour and diſpatch. A grand object of at-

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tention with the present miniſtry ſeems to be to reſtore the navy, which was almoſt totally deſtroyed during the late war with England.

The number of workmen commonly employed at Rochfort, is about nine hundred, and to theſe are added ſix hundred galley ſlaves, who are occupied in the moſt painful and laborious branches of ſervice. They are chained two and two with heavy fetters, conſtantly guarded, and confined in a long building erected for that purpoſe in the center of the yard. Some of theſe wretches are thus detained for a term of years; others during life. The precautions uſed to prevent their eſcape are excellent, and improved on continually by experience—yet, in ſpite of every obſtacle, they are continually eluded.

The armoury, the rope-walks, the ſtorehouſes of every kind, are all in the beſt order, and kept with prodigious neatneſs. Louis the fourteenth fortified the city at the time he conſtructed it; but its ſituation, at ſo conſiderable a diſtance from the ſea, renders it ſufficiently ſecure from any attack, and they have therefore lately cloſed up the battlements, and neglected the fortifications. It is laid out with

great beauty and elegance. The ſtreets are all very broad and ſtrait, extending through the whole place from ſide to ſide; but the buildings do not correſpond with them in this reſpect, as they are moſtly low and irregular.

The province of Saintonge, of which this city is the capital, begins at a ſmall diſtance from Rochfort: The antiquities which Saintes ſtill contains, have chiefly detained me here ſince yeſterday morning. It was a Roman colony, and thoſe conquerors of the earth, who poliſhed the nations they ſubdued, have left behind them the traces of their magnificence. In a hollow valley between two mountains, and almoſt adjoining to one of the ſuburbs, are the ruins of the amphitheatre. Tho' now in the laſt ſtage of decay, its appearance is auguſt and venerable. In ſome parts, ſcarce any of the arches are to be ſeen; but the eaſt end is ſtill in a great degree of preſervation. From its ſituation in a valley, and from the ruins of an aqueduct which conveyed water to the town from near three leagues diſtance, it has been ſuppoſed that Naumachiæ were repreſented in it, but this amounts only to conjecture. A tri-

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umphal arch, on which is an inſcription in Roman letters, merits likewiſe attention. It was erected to Germanicus, on the news of his death, ſo univerſally lamented throughout the empire.

The river Charente ſurrounds this city, as the Severn does that of Shrewſbury, deſcribing the form of a horſe-ſhoe. I have been walking in the beautiful meadows which border upon it, and from whence the buildings of the town have a fine effect. Tho' the Charente cannot compare with the Loire or the Rhone in ſize and depth, yet the actions which have been performed on its banks in different ages, will render it immortal in hiſtory. At Taillebourg, only ſix miles from hence, and nearer to its mouth, was fought the battle between Henry the third of England and St. Louis, where the latter was conqueror, and in which he gave proofs of undaunted prowefs and intrepidity, by defending almoſt alone, the paſſage of a bridge againſt the whole Engliſh army, during ſome minutes. Francis the firſt, one of the moſt amiable and accompliſhed princes who ever reigned in France, was born in 1494, at Cognac, only ſeven leagues

higher up on the Charente. Two leagues beyond Cognac, ſtill nearer its ſource, is the famous plain of Jarnac, where the Hugonots were beat in 1569 by the duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry the third; and where the great Louis, firſt prince of Condé was aſſaſſinated by Monteſquiou. I am told that the preſent Count de Jarnac has cauſed a monument to be erected within theſe few years over the ſpot where periſhed that unhappy prince. I intended to have gone along the banks of the Charente, through both theſe laſt-mentioned places, to Angouleſme; but the difficulties are almoſt inſuperable, as there is no poſt road yet eſtabliſhed; and I therefore purſue the ſtrait route to Bourdeaux, through Pons and Blaye.

Except the remains of Roman grandeur yet viſible at Saintes, the place contains very little to detain or amuſe a traveller. It is built with great irregularity; the ſtreets are narrow and winding, the houſes mean, and almoſt all of them are ſome centuries old. The cathedral has been repeatedly defaced and deſtroyed by Normans and Hugonots, who made war alike on every monument of art or piety. One tower only eſcaped their rage, which

which is ſaid to have been built as early as the year eight hundred, by Charlemagne. It is of an enormous magnitude, both as to heighth and circumference. Theſe circumſtances have probably conduced more to its preſervation during the fury of war, than any veneration for the memory of its founder, or for the ſanctity of its inſtitution.

The Reformed Religion ſeems far on the decline in this province, where anciently it had gained ſo many votaries. There is only one Proteſtant family, as I am aſſured, in Saintes: the reaſon is evident;—the fervours of devotion, warm and animated in the beginning, are nouriſhed by perſecution, but unhappily become languid and extinct in an age of more mild and tolerating principles. Intereſt is ever preſent, ever intimately felt by mankind. The Eſtabliſhed Religion holds out offices and honours; Proteſtantiſm is barren: Her rewards are in another world. Can you wonder that it loſes ground continually? Adieu!

Your's, &c. &c.

Bourdeaux, Friday, 7th October, 1775.

I Continued my journey from Saintes last Sunday sennight, and slept at Pons, a small town agreeably situated on a mountain. Near the summit, in the centre of the place, is an ancient castle belonging to the Prince de Marsan, which commands an extensive and luxuriant prospect of the vales of Saintonge and Angoumois covered with vines, and watered by two or three fine rivulets which lose themselves, after many windings, in the Charente. I entered the province of Guyenne the next day, and arrived at Blaye, on the northern bank of the Garonne, on Tuesday morning. I put my carriage into a boat, and came up to this city by water; a distance of about seven leagues. At Blaye, the river is above four miles in breadth, but it diminishes insensibly as one approaches Bourdeaux. Nearly half way between the two places, is the mouth of the river Dordogne, which after running through the Limosin and Perigord, empties itself into the Garonne. The prospect at the conflux of these two streams, is wonderfully picturesque.

picturefque. It is more cultivated and pleafing, tho' lefs fublime and magnificent, than that at the junction of the Viftula and the Nogat, near Marienbourg in Polifh Pruffia.

Our paffage from Blaye was long, and the fun was fetting as we turned round a point of land, which opened to us the city of Bourdeaux at the diftance of three miles. The effect on the fpectator is exceedingly ftriking. It defcribes the figure of a crefcent more than a league in length, the buildings of which near the water-fide are all modern, lofty, and very elegant. I have feen no profpect fo fuperb in Europe, except the view of Lifbon from the tower of Belem on the river Tagus, which tho' more irregular from the nature of its fituation, is perhaps fuperior in magnificence.

The favourable impreffion which Bourdeaux cannot fail to make on a ftranger at his firft arrival, is well confirmed by a refidence in it. Pleafure feems to have as many votaries here as commerce; luxury and induftry reign within the fame walls, and that in the moft extenfive degree. The air of

courts

courts is ever effeminate, ſeducing, and voluptuous. Commercial cities are uſually marked by oppoſite manners, and the love of gain, powerful in its influence over the human heart, generally obſcures and abſorbs the ſofter paſſions. Here, however, theſe rules are by no means verified. Luxury and diſſipation are more openly patronized, and have made a more univerſal conqueſt, than in half the capitals of Europe. At Stockholm, ſcarce the ſhadow of them is perceivable. Neither Copenhagen nor St. Peterſburgh are yet advanced to the ſame point of exceſs, tho' aided by the preſence of their ſovereigns, and the pleaſures which naturally follow in their train. Hamburgh, tho' perhaps equal in ſize, poſſeſs'd of as much commerce, and as much opulence as Bourdeaux, betrays no external marks of diſſolute manners, and puniſhes them with extreme ſeverity. It is natural to ſeek for the reaſon of this extraordinary contraſt. We ſhall find it, I apprehend, chiefly in the genius of the French nation, and in the ſpirit of the government, which rather encourages than repreſſes luxury among all ranks of people. Superſtition, the only engine capable of oppoſing the torrent, has

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ceaſed in France, where the Virgin is held in as little eſtimation as among us.—Diveſt mankind of the influence which religion, intereſt, and decorum have over them, what reſtraint can be affixed to the gratification of their paſſions?

The ancient city of Bourdeaux, tho' conſiderable in point of ſize, was, (what indeed every other city in Europe was at the acceſſion of Louis the fourteenth,) ill built, badly paved, dangerous, without police or any of thoſe municipal regulations indiſpenſably requiſite to render a city ſplendid or elegant. It has entirely changed its appearance within theſe laſt thirty years. The public edifices are very noble, and all the ſtreets newly built, are regular and handſome. I am never tired of walking on the banks of the Garonne. The quays are four miles in length, and the river itſelf is conſiderably broader than the Thames at London bridge. On the oppoſite ſide, a range of hills, covered with woods, vineyards, churches and villas, extends beyond the view.

Almoſt in the center of the town, is a fine equeſtrian ſtatue in bronze erected to the late

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king in 1743. It is very rarely that I am much affected by the inscriptions under the figures of princes, which usually contain only a detail of virtues and qualities they never possessed; but there is something in this, so pathetic, so simple, and so much addressed to the heart, that I have retained it in my memory.

"Ludovico quindecimo,
"Sæpe victori, semper pacificatori;
"Suos omnes, quam late regnum patet
"Paterno pectore gerenti;
"Suorum in animis penitus habitanti."

The beauty of the river Garonne, and the fertility of the adjoining country, were probably the causes which induced the Romans to lay the foundations of this city. The ruins of a very large amphitheatre yet remain, constructed under the emperor Gallienus; it is of brick, as are most of the edifices of that period, when the empire was verging to its fall, and the arts began rapidly to decline.

During the irruptions of the barbarous nations, and peculiarly in those which the Normans repeatedly made, Bourdeaux was ravaged, burnt, and almost entirely destroyed.

It only began to recover again under Henry the ſecond of England, who having united it to the crown by his marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine, rebuilt it, and made it a principal object of his policy, to reſtore the city again to the luſtre from which it had fallen.

The Black Prince received all Guyenne, Gaſcony, and many inferior provinces in full ſovereignty from his father Edward the third; he brought his royal captive, John King of France, to this city, after the battle of Poitiers in 1356; and held his court and reſidence here during eleven years. His exalted character, his uninterrupted ſeries of good fortune, his victories, his modeſty, his affability, and his munificence, drew ſtrangers to Bourdeaux from every part of Europe; but all this ſplendour ſoon diſappeared. He lived to experience the ingratitude of Pedro the Cruel, to whom he had reſtored the kingdom of Caſtile; he became a prey to diſtempers in the vigour of life; he ſaw his dominions reunited again in many of their branches, to the crown of France, by Charles the fifth; he loſt his eldeſt ſon, Edward, a prince of the higheſt expectations; and at length, overcome with ſor-

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row at this laſt affliction, he quitted Bourdeaux, and re-embarked for England, there to expire, a memorable example of the haſty revolution of human greatneſs! In 1453, Charles the ſeventh, king of France, re-entered the city, and ſubjected the whole province of Guyenne, which had been near three centuries under the Engliſh government. Conſcious of the importance of ſuch a conqueſt, he ordered the "Chateau Trompette" to be built to defend the paſſage of the river, and Louis the fourteenth afterwards employed the celebrated Vauban to erect a new fortreſs, in the modern ſtyle of military architecture, on the ſame ſpot.—Madame de Maintenon, whom fortune ſeemed to have choſen as the object of her extremeſt rigour, and extremeſt bounty, was removed from the priſons of Niort in Poictou where ſhe was born, with her father the Baron d'Aubigné, to this caſtle, where ſhe uſed to play with the daughter of the turnkey, in the greateſt indigence.

Bourdeaux preſents few remains of antiquity. The cathedral appears to be very old, and has ſuffered conſiderably from the effects

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of time. The unfortunate duke of Guyenne, brother to Louis the eleventh, who was poifoned in 1473, lies buried before the high altar.—The adjacent country, more peculiarly the "Pays de Medoc," which produces the fineft clarets, is exceedingly pleafant; and at this feafon when the peafants are all engaged in the vintage, forms one of the moft delicious landfcapes in the world. My ftay here will probably be fome days longer. Meanwhile I remain, &c.

Ausch in Armagnac,
Saturday, 14th October, 1775.

I LEFT Bourdeaux last Tuesday morning, and taking the road to Agen, along the southern bank of the Garonne. I crossed that river at Langon, a little town pleasantly situated on its banks, and stopped in the evening at La Reole. It was my intention to have proceeded farther, but the landlady was too eloquent: she offered to send her little boy who would conduct me over the ruins of the castle, while she herself prepared a brace of partridges, and the finest desert in the world, against my return. I suffered myself to be persuaded, and walked out while supper was getting ready. The sun had set, but the sky was without a cloud, and the air perfectly serene. The castle of La Reole overhangs the waters of the Garonne, and is reflected in its surface; time has crumbled many of the battlements into ruin, but enough yet remains to shew its former splendor. Catherine of Medicis resided in it some time, during one of the journies which she made into the southern provinces; and Henry

Henry the fourth, then only king of Navarre, had here an interview with her, at which he fell in love with the beautiful Mademoiſelle d'Ayelle, one of her maids of honour.

I dined the enſuing day at Aiguillon. On the hill above the town, ſtands the chateau of the celebrated duke d'Aiguillon, who has lived to experience the moſt ſevere reverſe of fortune; and after having been the miniſter and the favourite of Louis the fifteenth, is now ſentenced to paſs the remainder of his days, an exile in his own houſe, deprived of power, and unaccompanied even with that compaſſion which often waits on illuſtrious perſons in diſgrace. He has been already here ſome months; happy, if the royal diſpleaſure purſue him no farther, and if the ſtories of a Fouquet or a Marechal d'Ancre are not again renewed in him.

I reached Agen in the afternoon. The country through which I paſſed from Langon where I croſſed the Garonne, to the gates of that city, is fertile beyond any I have ſeen in Europe. The hills are all covered with vineyards to the ſummit, and the vallies ſcarce require the induſtry of the peaſants to produce

in plenty whatever is neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence. The climate at this ſeaſon is delicious; and no marks of winter appear in any of the productions of nature. Cherry trees, figs, acacias, poplars, and elms, are in full verdure; in many places, where they border on the ſide of the road, the vines have run up, and mixed their cluſters among the boughs: this is truly beautiful, and picturesque. Milton, in his divine flights of imagination could employ our firſt parents in no more delightful occupation, even in Paradiſe.——

" Or they led the vine
" To wed her elm; ſhe round about him throws
" Her marriageable arms; and with her brings
" Her dower, th' adopted cluſters, to adorn
" His barren leaves."

In the midſt of this charming country, in a plain, cloſe to the Garonne, ſtands the city of Agen. Behind it, to the north, riſes a very high hill, called " Le Rocher de la belle " Vue." I went up to the ſummit, on which there is a convent. The chapel, and ſome of the adjoining cells are hollowed out of the rock. It is ſaid that theſe apartments are very

very ancient, and were made many centuries ago by hermits, who retired thither from motives of devotion and aufterity. The profpect is beautiful, commanding over the "Condo-"mois, Agenois, and Armagnac;" beneath, lies the city of Agen, and through the meadows which furround it, rolls the Garonne. One of the monks fhewed me the apartments of the convent; and in the receffes of the rock he led me to a fpring which is never dry, and which he affured me had been opened by miracle, at the interceffion of fome holy recluse in ages paft. Their little refectory was hung with portraits of the fame monaftic heroes, among which was St. William duke of Aquitaine; and at the upper end, in golden letters, was written "Silentium."

Agen is a very mean and difagreeable place: the houfes are ill built, the ftreets narrow, crooked, and dirty. I faw only one building in it, which appeared to me deferving of notice. It is a chapel belonging to a nunnery of Carmelites. The walls are exquifitely painted in Chiaro Ofcuro, and the deception of the roof, which is executed in the fame manner, is admirable. The high

altar is magnificent, and adorned with a piece of painting, the ſubject of which is very intereſting. It is a nun, ſinking under the tranſports of holy contemplation. She appears as if incapable of ſupporting the divine effulgence of her celeſtial lover, with eyes half cloſed, and arms expanded. Above, deſcends a radiant figure, with looks of tenderneſs and pleaſure, ſurrounded with the glories of the ſkies, too ſtrong for mortal ſight. If it had not been a religious edifice, I ſhould have ſuppoſed it to be the ſtory of Jupiter and Semelé, to which it bears the moſt apt reſemblance. Near the piece is this inſcription.

"Quid non conatur Amor!
"Cœlos in Terris adumbrare
"Carmeli Filiæ tentarunt,
"Anno ſalutis
"1773."

Surely, you muſt here be ſtruck with the juſtice of a remark which we have often made together, on the intimate alliance between love and devotion, when carried to an exceſs. The ſame enthuſiaſm, the ſame melting language, the ſame overpowering delights, are common

common to both paſſions. Love, ſays Rouſſeau, in the extreme, borrows the language of Devotion; and Devotion, in her flights, adopts the expreſſions of attachment and fondneſs.

We are uſed to apprehend the condition of a young woman who has taken the veil to be very miſerable. Where convenience, or chagrin, or melancholy, are the motives to this act of ſelf-dedication, I fully concur in that opinion; but there are women, I doubt not, who in the gloom of a convent, amid ſhrines and crucifixes, are yet ſupremely happy. Married to a heavenly ſpouſe, and dedicated to the embraces of a ſuperior and inviſible being, Enthuſiaſm has ample room to exert her powers, and raiſe her votary above the poor gratifications of earth.

> " To ſounds of heavenly harps ſhe dies away,
> " And melts in viſions of eternal day."

But I return——

Agen has anciently been fortified, and the Gothic battlements and turrets yet remain almoſt entire round the whole place. Margaret of Valois, daughter of Henry the ſecond of France, and wife to Henry the fourth, ſo

renowned for her genius, her adventures, and her gallantries, kept her little court some time at this city, during the civil wars which desolated France, and the quarrels which subsisted between her husband and brothers.— The Agenois was part of that fine domain, which by the peace of Bretigni in 1360, was ceded to the crown of England, and constituted part of the territories governed by Edward, the Black Prince. It followed the fate of Guyenne under Charles the seventh, who re-conquered it, and for ever re-annexed it to the dominions of France.

I continued my journey from Agen on Thursday evening, and at Layrac I once more crossed the Garonne. The passage is difficult, and sometimes dangerous, the river being very rapid, and running between high banks.——I stopt a few hours yesterday morning at the city of Leytoure. As it is situated on a mountain, the sides of which are very steep, I left my carriage below, and walked up alone. Here, from the summit, I had the first view of the Pyrenees, at the distance of ninety miles; their heads lost in clouds, and covered with eternal snow.

While

While I ſtood gazing on theſe ſtupendous mountains, a gentleman very politely accoſted me, and obſerving that I was a ſtranger, offered me his ſervices to ſhew me whatever objects of curioſity the city contained.

"This place," ſaid he, "was a Roman "colony, and called by them Lectoura. "Many antiquities have been diſcovered "here; and a beautiful fountain, which "ſprings from the ſide of the hill near the "epiſcopal palace, is declared by immemo-"rial tradition to have been conſecrated to "Diana, who had a temple near the ſpot. In "ſucceeding ages, Leytoure belonged to the "Counts of Armagnac, who were great "vaſſals of the crown of France, and ſove-"reigns in their own territories. The laſt "of theſe princes, John the fifth, was put "to death in this city. His hiſtory was very "ſingular. He began his reign in 1450. "The youngeſt of his ſiſters, Iſabella, was a "princeſs of uncommon beauty and accom-"pliſhments; the Count conceived a paſſion "for her, and, unable to repreſs or extin-"guiſh it, he determined, in defiance of "every obſtacle, to make her his wife. He

" married her publicly; but the reigning Pope, " offended at ſo inceſtuous a union, de- " nounced againſt him a ſentence of excom- " munication; and Charles the ſeventh, king " of France, prepared to enforce it by the in- " ſtant ſeizure of his dominions. He ſent the " Dauphin, afterwards Louis the eleventh, " into Armagnac, at the head of a body of " forces. The Count, abandoned by his " ſubjects, and incapable of reſiſtance, fled " to Fontarabia, carrying with him his be- " loved ſiſter. Having, however, at the inter- " ceſſion of the Count de Foix, obtained his " pardon, and the reſtoration of his poſſeſſions, " he returned to Leytoure, leaving the beau- " tiful and unhappy Iſabel in Spain, where " ſhe died in the utmoſt obſcurity.—Louis the " eleventh, leſs generous and merciful than his " father, afterwards determined on the Count's " deſtruction, from the deſire of uniting ſo " ample a fief to the crown of France. He de- " clared war againſt John, and in 1473, an " army under the command of Peter de Beau- " jeu his ſon-in-law, was ſent into Armagnac. " John the fifth retired to Leytoure, in which " place he was inveſted. He capitulated on very

" honourable

" honourable terms, and on the moſt ſolemn " aſſurances of being continued in the poſſeſ- " ſion of his dominions.—But while the " treaty was on the point of being ſigned, " and the Count, confiding in the honour " of the king, remitted his uſual vigilance, " the ſoldiers broke into the town, and he was " himſelf murdered in his own palace. Louis " immediately ſeized on his poſſeſſions, as " eſcheated to the crown."

I liſtened to this affecting ſtory with great attention. When the gentleman had concluded it, he conducted me to the brow of the mountain, where are ſtill the remains of a caſtle. " In this fortreſs," ſaid he (renewing his diſcourſe) " the noble and unfortu- " nate Marechal de Montmorenci, (grandſon " to the famous conſtable of France of the " ſame name,) was confined, after the battle " of Caſtelnaudari, in 1632. So amiable " was his character, ſo general was the at- " tachment borne to him, and ſo deteſted " was the Cardinal de Richlieu his enemy, " that the ladies of the place attempted by a " ſtratagem to procure him his liberty. They " ſent him, as a preſent, a large pye, in

"which was concealed a ſilken ladder of ropes. "He loſt no time in endeavouring to avail "himſelf of this inſtrument for his eſcape, "and having fixed it the ſame evening, to the "window of his apartment, he ordered his "valet to deſcend firſt, with intent to follow "him; but the ſervant having unfortunately "miſſed his hold, fell, and in the fall broke "his thigh. The centinels, alarmed at his "cries, ran to the ſpot, and intercepted the "Marechal, who was ſoon after conducted to "Toulouſe, and there put to death."

My polite conductor quitted me, and I continued my walk alone. Leytoure occupies a level ſpace of more than half a mile in circumference, on the ſummit of a mountain. The fortifications in many parts are yet entire, and the ſituation, admirably calculated for defence, was probably the motive which induced the Romans there to conſtruct a city.

I left Leytoure at noon, and arrived here laſt night, the diſtance being only five-and-twenty miles. This place is the capital of Armagnac, and like Leytoure, it lies on the ſummit and declivity of a very ſteep hill, which is ſurrounded by other hills that riſe

at a ſmall diſtance. Through the vale below runs a rivulet, called the Gers. The inhabitants of Auſch are about ſix thouſand, the buildings modern and elegant; the ſtreets, tho' in general narrow, yet are clean, and well paved. In the center of the city ſtands the cathedral, which is one of the moſt magnificent in France, both as to its conſtruction, and the internal decorations. The painted windows are only inferior to thoſe of Gouda in Holland. The chapels are of equal beauty, and ornamented at a prodigious expence.

The revenues of the ſee of Auſch, which is archiepiſcopal, amount annually to three hundred thouſand livres. The palace correſponds with theſe ample poſſeſſions, and is a very handſome building. The apartments are furniſhed with a voluptuous ſplendour, rather becoming a temporal than a ſpiritual prince; and in the chamber where the archbiſhop himſelf ſleeps, I could not help ſmiling at a number of holy relics, which he has diſpoſed round a bed, on which Heliogabalus might have repoſed. The library is very ample, and adorned with ſome portraits. Among theſe, a fine head of the Cardinal de Polignac, who

was archbiſhop of Auſch, drew my attention. There is infinite genius marked in the countenance. A pale face; the contour, oval; an aquiline noſe, and an eye looking forward into futurity. Over his ſcarlet robe hangs the croſs of the Holy Ghoſt, on his breaſt. He was one of the many ſublime ſpirits who will for ever immortalize the age of Louis the fourteenth.

The country through which I have paſſed to the ſouth of the Garonne, is much more hilly, or rather mountainous, than that on the northern ſide of the river. It is not, however, leſs fertile or agreeable. Tho' I am aſſured that every article of life is more than doubled in price within theſe laſt ten years, yet this province is ſtill accounted one of the cheapeſt in the kingdom. The common wine of Armagnac is at preſent only five farthings a bottle: hares, partridges, and every kind of game, are found in vaſt abundance. Add to theſe advantages, a happy climate, and a people polite and gay from natural diſpoſition, and you will allow that a man muſt be very ſplenetic, who would die here of ennui.

To-morrow I continue my journey to Tarbes, and Pau in Bearn.

Orthez in Bearn,
Saturday, 21ſt October, 1775.

ARMAGNAC is a hilly and romantic country, abounding in beautiful proſpects, where rudeneſs and cultivation are finely blended. At Rabaſteins, a little town, I entered the province of Bigorre, and got the ſame evening to Tarbes, which is the capital. My intention was to have viſited Barege, ſo famous for its medicinal baths; but its ſituation in the midſt of the Pyrenees, where the winter has already begun, and which are covered at this time with ſnow, has induced me to relinquiſh my deſign. I ſtayed a day at Bagneres de Bigorre, a place hardly leſs celebrated than Barege. It is only about twelve miles diſtant from Tarbes, and the road lies through a rich vale, at the end of which, immediately under the Pyrenean mountains, ſtands the town. It has been crowded with company during the ſummer, who are now forſaking it. Nothing can exceed the environs of Bagneres in beauty. Even at this advanced ſeaſon, when nature is

on her decline, and the leaves begin to take the hue of autumn, the country yet retains a thousand charms. The Pyrenees, which rise above the town, and whose craggy summits are lost in clouds, form an object the most magnificent that can be imagined; while on the other side appear fertile vallies covered with vines, and interspersed with hamlets. There are many springs near Bagneres, both warm and cold, which issue out of the mountains, and are of different virtues. Those called "Les "bains de salut," are the principal; they are about half a mile from the town, and the walk to them, between the hills, is equally agreeable and romantic.

I cannot help regretting that the year is too far advanced to permit me to pass some weeks among the Pyrenees. An admirer of nature must find ample subject for reflection, and the greatest sources of entertainment amidst the extraordinary scenes which present themselves in this chain of rocks, stretching from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. They seem as if designed to form a barrier between France and Spain, which no union of blood or policy can ever effectually surmount,

notwithſtanding the celebrated words of Louis the fourteenth to his grandſon Philip, when ready to ſet out for Madrid—“ Mon fils, il “ n'y a plus des Pyrenees.”

I left Tarbes on Wedneſday laſt, and got to Pau in ſix hours, the diſtance not exceeding thirty miles. The province of Bearn begins about a league from Tarbes, at the aſcent of a very ſteep and lofty mountain, which divides it from Bigorre. The city of Pau will be for ever memorable in hiſtory, ſince it was the birth-place of Henry the fourth. That immortal prince was born in the caſtle, then the uſual reſidence of the kings of Navarre. You will not doubt that I viſited it with equal pleaſure and attention. It ſtands on one of the moſt romantic and ſingular ſpots I have ever ſeen, at the weſt end of the town, upon the brow of a rock which terminates perpendicularly. Below, runs the Gave, a river, or rather a torrent, which riſes in the Pyrenees, and empties itſelf into the Adour. On the other ſide, about two miles off, is a ridge of hills, covered with vineyards, which produce the famous “ Vin de Jorençon,” ſo much admired; and beyond all, at the diſtance

diſtance of nine leagues, appear the Pyrenees themſelves, covering the horizon from eaſt to weſt, and bounding the proſpect. The caſtle, tho' now in a ſtate of decay, is ſtill habitable; and the apartments are hung with tapeſtry, ſaid to be the work of Jane queen of Navarre, and mother of Henry the fourth. Gaſton the fourth, Count de Foix, who married Leonora, heireſs of the crown of Navarre, began the edifice in 1464; but his ſucceſſor, Henry d'Albret compleated and enlarged it, about the year 1519, when he made choice of the city of Pau for his reſidence, and where, during the remainder of his reign, he held his little court.

In a chamber, which by its ſize was formerly a room of ſtate, is a fine whole length portrait of that Jane, Queen of Navarre, whom I have juſt mentioned. Her dreſs is very ſplendid, and reſembles thoſe in which our Elizabeth is uſually painted. Her head-dreſs is adorned with pearls; round her neck ſhe wears a ruff; and her arms, which are likewiſe covered with pearls, are concealed by her habit, quite down to the wriſt. At her waiſt hangs by a chain a miniature portrait.

trait. The fingers of her right hand play on the ſtrings of a guittar; and in her left ſhe holds an embroidered handkerchief. The painter has drawn her as young, yet not in the firſt bloom of youth. Her features are regular, her countenance thin, but rather inclining to long; the eyes hazel, and the eye-brows finely arched. Her noſe is well formed, tho' large, and her mouth pretty. She was a great princeſs, of high ſpirit, and undaunted magnanimity. Her memory is not revered by the French hiſtorians, becauſe ſhe was the protectreſs of the Hugonots, and the friend of Coligni; but the actions of her life evince her diſtinguiſhed merit.

In one of the adjoining chambers, is another portrait of Henry the fourth himſelf, when a boy; and on the ſecond floor is the apartment in which he was born. The particulars of his birth are in themſelves ſo curious, and as relating to ſo great and good a prince, are ſo peculiarly intereſting, that I doubt not you will forgive my enumerating them, even tho' you ſhould have ſeen them elſewhere.—His mother Jane had already loſt two ſons, the duke de Beaumont, and the count de Marle.

Marle. Henry d'Albret, her father, anxious to ſee an heir to his dominions, enjoined her, (when ſhe accompanied her huſband Anthony of Bourbon to the wars of Picardy, againſt the Spaniards), if ſhe proved with child, to return to Pau, and to lie-in there, as he would himſelf ſuperintend the education of the infant, from the moment of its birth. He threatened to diſinherit her, if ſhe failed to comply with this injunction. The princeſs, in obedience to the king's command, being in the ninth month of her pregnancy, quitted Compiegne in the end of November, traverſed all France in fifteen days, and arrived at Pau, where ſhe was delivered of a ſon on the thirteenth December, 1553. She had always been deſirous to ſee her father's will, which he kept in a golden box; and he promiſed to ſhew it to her, provided ſhe admitted of his being preſent at her delivery, and would, during the pains of her labour, ſing a ſong in the Bearnois language. Jane had courage enough to perform this unuſual requeſt; and the king being called on the firſt news of her illneſs, ſhe immediately ſung a Bearnois ſong, beginning, "Notre Dame du bout du pont, aidez moi

"en

"en cette heure."—As ſhe finiſhed it, Henry was born. The king inſtantly performed his promiſe, by giving her the box, together with a golden chain, which he tyed about her neck; and taking the infant into his own apartment, began by making him ſwallow ſome drops of wine, and rubbing his lips with a root of garlic. The manner of his being brought up was ſimilar, and in a prince almoſt unexampled. He was ſent to the caſtle of Coarace in Bearn, where, without any regard to his quality, he uſed to run about with the children of the neighbouring peaſants, barefooted and bareheaded, even in the rigours of winter. This ſevere education formed his body to fatigue and hardſhip, for the exerciſe of which he had no little occaſion during his future life, in the long wars with Henry the third, and the duke of Mayenne. They ſtill ſhew a tortoiſe ſhell which ſerved him for a cradle, and is preſerved on that account.

Several of the ancient ſovereigns of Navarre reſided and died in the caſtle of Pau. Francois Phœbus, who aſcended the throne in 1479, died here in 1483. He was only ſixteen years of age, his mother being regent.

The

The young king, who was very fond of music, having taken up a flute, had no sooner applied it to his mouth, than he felt himself affected with poison, and that in so violent a manner, that he expired in two hours. This murder was attributed to Ferdinand king of Arragon, a man whose character justified the worst suspicions, and who soon after seized on the kingdom. Catherine de Foix succeeded her brother Francois Phœbus. She married John d'Albret, and was the last real queen of Navarre, little more than an empty title having remained to her successors. She died of grief for the loss of her dominions, which was chiefly caused by the incapacity and cowardice of her husband. Her reproach to him was very poignant: "Dom Jean," said she, "si nous fussions nés, vous Catherine "de Foix, et moi Dom Jean d'Albret, nous "n'aurions jamais perdu la Navarre!"

Pau is a handsome city, well built, and contains near six thousand inhabitants. It is a modern place, having owed its existence entirely to the castle, and to the residence of the kings of Navarre.

I pursued

I purſued my journey this morning. The country from Pau to Orthez is moſtly level, finely cultivated, and covered with vines. The peaſants ſpeak a jargon unintelligible even to the French. Their dreſs too differs very much from that worn in Guyenne, and both their dreſs and their complexions bear a reſemblance to the Spaniſh.—This place is a city and biſhopric, but the meaneſt, I believe, in France. The cathedral is a wretched edifice, very ancient, built in a barbarous ſtyle, and almoſt in ruins. I expected to have found in it ſome monuments of the kings of Navarre, but have been diſappointed. The remains of the caſtle of Orthez are very noble; and its ſituation is fine, on a hill which commands the town, and a great extent of country. The people call it "Le Chateau "de la Reine Jeanne," becauſe that queen reſided in it during many years, in preference to the caſtle of Pau. Some of the apartments, tho' in ruins, may yet be entered. The princeſs Blanche, daughter to John king of Arragon and Navarre, was ſhut up, and died here, in 1464. Her brother being dead, ſhe became heireſs to the crown of Navarre; but her father

father having delivered her into the hands of her younger ſiſter Leonora, counteſs of Foix, ſhe confined the unhappy Blanche in the caſtle of Orthez, and after an impriſonment of two years, cauſed her to be poiſoned.

Hiſtory, from its earlieſt commencement to the preſent century, preſents a frightful picture of maſſacres and crimes, at which humanity recoils. We find ambition and ſubtlety too often triumphant, while innocence and the moſt amiable qualities, unleſs accompanied with vigour and capacity, frequently conduct their unfortunate poſſeſſors to violent or ignominious ends.—But I have done with reflections. It is late, and I ſet out to-morrow for Bayonne. Probably from thence, I may ſend you the concluſion of this letter.

Bayonne, Wednefday, 25th October, 1775.

I Continued my journey laft Sunday morning. The province of Bearn is a fertile country, abounding in fine acclivities, and well cultivated.

I arrived at this city in the afternoon. Its fituation is one of the moft agreeable in France, at the conflux of two rivers, the Nive and the Adour. The latter is fcarce lefs confiderable than the Thames at Lambeth, and acrofs it is a wooden bridge, which joins Bayonne to a fuburb called "Le Faux-"bourg du St. Efprit." The Nive, which is fmall, and rifes in the Pyrenees, paffes through the centre of the city, and refembles one of the canals in Holland. Advantageous as this fituation appears for commerce, yet the trade of Bayonne is not only inconfiderable, but yearly diminifhes. The entrance of the Adour, which is about four miles below the town, is rendered both difficult and hazardous from the fands which have collected, and which form a bar acrofs its mouth. Befides this

inconvenience, the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux draws to that city moſt of thoſe articles of trade which were formerly exported from hence; and ſo rapidly have both the commerce and population of this place declined, that the former is reduced to the ſhadow of what it once was, and the number of inhabitants has decreaſed within theſe laſt twelve years from twenty-one thouſand to leſs than ten thouſand. Bayonne is, notwithſtanding theſe circumſtances, a very agreeable place of reſidence, and furniſhes in profuſion all the requiſites for human life. Wild fowl is in prodigious plenty, and the flavour exceedingly delicate. The Bay of Biſcay, and the river Adour ſupply excellent fiſh. The "Vin de Cap Breton," and the "Vin d'Anglet," which are made in the adjacent country, infinitely exceed the miſerable claret drank in this part of the kingdom, and are ſold at eight ſous a bottle. The town is ſurrounded with woods, which render fuel one of the cheapeſt articles, and the climate itſelf is delicious, tho' the vicinity of the Pyrenean mountains very much increaſes the cold in winter.

The buildings of the city are in general very old, and ſome of the ſtreets, like thoſe of Rochelle, have porticoes on either ſide; but the "Place de Grammont" on the bank of the Adour, is adorned with very elegant modern houſes and public edifices. On an eminence in the midſt of the town ſtands the cathedral. I could gain no other intelligence from the inhabitants reſpecting it, except that the Engliſh conſtructed it during the time that they were maſters of Bayonne and Gaſcony. It is a venerable pile, and, to judge from the ſtyle and ornaments of the various parts, it muſt have been built as early as the year 1350. I have made ſeveral viſits to it, in hopes of diſcovering ſome tombs or monuments of antiquity: but there is not any thing deſerving attention, except the relics of St. Leo, who was put to death here in 907, and whoſe bones are preſerved in a ſplendid ſhrine over the high altar.

Bayonne, tho' conſidered as a frontier city of France, is very ill fortified, the ramparts and foſſes being equally neglected. On the north ſide of the Adour, Louis the fourteenth cauſed a citadel to be conſtructed by Vauban, on

a hill which commands the town, and in which there is always a garriſon of about a thouſand ſoldiers. Till the year 1193, this place, and a conſiderable territory round it, was governed by its own Viſcounts. The Engliſh rendered themſelves maſters of it at that time, under the reign of Richard the firſt, and kept poſſeſſion of it till 1451, when Charles the ſeventh's victorious arms annexed it to the crown of France. It has never been retaken ſince, tho' Philip the third and fourth of Spain made, each of them, an attempt for that purpoſe. The common people are called, from the name of the province in which Bayonne is ſituated, "Baſques." Their dreſs is peculiar to themſelves. The women comb up their hair on the crown of their heads, and cover it with a ſort of cap exactly reſembling a little turban, which has no inelegant effect. The complexions of both ſexes are conſiderably darker than in Guyenne, and they ſpeak a jargon called the Baſque, which has ſcarce any affinity either with the French, Spaniſh, or even the Gaſcon dialect.

I had

I had ſome intention, before I arrived here, of viſiting Pampelona, capital of the Spaniſh Navarre; but the advanced ſeaſon, the Pyrenean mountains which it is very difficult to paſs even in the ſmalleſt two-wheeled carriage, and above all the mortality among the cattle, which has continued a conſiderable time in this and the adjoining provinces, are ſuch inſuperable obſtacles as compel me to relinquiſh my deſign.

At this city my journey to the ſouthward ends, and to-morrow I ſhall ſet out for Touloſe. I am under a neceſſity of taking the ſame route by which I came, as far as Auſch, there being no other poſt-road in this part of France. I ſhall write as I proceed.

Toulouſe, 8th November, 1775.

THE country from Bayonne to the paſſage over the river Adour, is heathy, woody, and barren, neither well peopled nor cultivated, in compariſon with the greater part of the provinces of Bearn, and Bigorre. I got to Orthez in the evening. The ſun had ſet, but after the fineſt day imaginable: I walked out, and having a curioſity to look once more at the ruins of the caſtle, I aſcended the hill on which it ſtands, and ſtayed a few minutes within the walls. The gloom of night began already to ſhade the chambers, and ſpread an awful melancholy through the whole edifice. As I paſſed out of the great gate-way into the road on my return to the inn, an old peaſant met me, and with great ſimplicity aſſured me, that it was already paſt the hour when the inhabitants ventured into the caſtle, becauſe the apparition of a princeſs who had been murdered in it, walked at night; and that he himſelf when young, had ſeen and heard things very unuſual, and very terrifying,

in the great tower. This tradition of a murdered princess is certainly that of the unfortunate Blanche of Navarre, whom I have already mentioned; and was one of those catastrophes which naturally give birth, among the credulous and superstitious multitude, to tales of spectres, and their train of horrors.

I dined at Pau, and passed some time in the "Parc d'Henri quatre." This is a beautiful wood, overhanging the Gave, and terminating at a point, from whence is an extensive and romantic prospect. As Henry, while he held his court in Bearn, was fond of this grove, it has retained his name.

I stayed four days at Tarbes on my return. The town stands in the midst of a finely cultivated plain, but contains very few objects of entertainment or instruction.

Francis the first, at the marriage of his sister Margaret of Valois with Henry d'Albret, King of Navarre, gave her the provinces of Armagnac and Bigorre as a dowry; and that celebrated princess, so well known for her genius and her writings, died at the "Chateau d'Odos," only a league from Tarbes, in 1549.

I croſſed all Armagnac to this city, and arrived here on the third of November. Toulouſe is the moſt diſagreeable and ill built place I have ſeen in France. It is a vaſt labyrinth, compoſed of ſtreets ſo crooked, narrow and winding, that it requires a clue to conduct a ſtranger through them. No ſquares, or public places, adorned with elegant buildings, as at Nantes or Bourdeaux, tho' it equals this laſt city in ſize. I almoſt accuſe myſelf for having remained ſix days in a place which preſents ſcarce any intereſting object to the eye or underſtanding, and where the imagination cannot even receive that pleaſing ſenſation which reſults from viſiting the ſpot where great actions have been performed in paſt ages. The annals of Toulouſe are marked with little except acts of cruelty or ſuperſtition; the death of a Montmorenci, or the execution of a Calas.

The cathedral is by no means a ſplendid pile of architecture. It was erected by Raymond the ſixth, about the year 1200. You will recollect that Languedoc was governed during ſeveral centuries by counts. Jane, the daughter and heireſs of Raymond the

ſeventh,

ſeventh, was married to Alfonſo brother of St. Louis; and by the deaths of that prince and princeſs without iſſue, who expired within a few days of each other at Savona in Italy, immediately after St. Louis's unfortunate cruſade and ſiege of Tunis, the county of Toulouſe was united to the crown of France in 1271.

The tomb of Pibrac, whoſe name is ſo often mentioned under the reign of Henry the third, is in the church of the "grands Auguſtins." This grave magiſtrate fell violently in love with the ſecond Margaret of Valois queen of Navarre, and wife of Henry the fourth, and ſacrificed, as hiſtory declares, at the treaty of Nerac, his public duties to his attachment for that princeſs. In a hiſtory of this city, which I procured on my arrival, a curious anecdote occurs relating to Margaret herſelf.—Catherine of Medicis, ſays the author, after the conference of Nerac, retired to Touloufe, carrying with her the queen of Navarre, who was tired of her huſband, and chagrined at his amours. The court, deſpairing of the pregnancy of Louiſa, queen of France, who had been married five years to Henry the third, was

very anxious that Margaret might have children. Catherine, her mother, who was ever addicted to astrology, having heard that there resided at Castelnaudari, a woman famous for her skill in telling fortunes and prying into futurity, went thither with her daughter to consult this "Diseure de bonne aventure." The princess was submitted in a state of nudity to the old woman's inspection, who examined all the parts of her person with extreme accuracy. She then returned this plain answer to the queen, with certain medicines which she had composed. "Madame, "votre fille est d'une très-bonne consti-"tution, et je me promets un bon succès de "mon remede, pourvu qu'elle puisse gagner "sur elle de se tenir *chaste* tout le tems "qui est marqué dans le regime; car j'ap-"prends que vous êtes mere et fille de "grandes *coureuses*." It is most probable that Margaret, whose constitution was of a very amorous kind, found too great difficulty in submitting to a prescription, which deprived her of those pleasures to which she was immoderately attached, nor could the person consulted have found out any better means of

preserving

preſerving her own credit, than by laying her royal patient under an injunction, which the knowledge ſhe had of her character and complexion, rendered it very certain ſhe would infringe.

Touloufe has ſome inland commerce by means of the famous canal cut to join the two ſeas, which opens into the Garonne juſt above the city, and conveys all the articles of trade from Cette to Bourdeaux, acroſs the provinces of Languedoc and Guyenne. This communication is however of little advantage to the place, which owes its chief gaiety to the parliament, and to the provincial nobility who reſide here in winter. I leave it this afternoon, and am meanwhile,

Yours, &c.

Beziers, Monday, 13th November, 1775.

I Quitted Toulouſe laſt Thurſday, and ſlept at Caſtelnaudari, which is near forty miles diſtant; it is a tolerable town, and ſituated on the "Royal Canal," made by Louis the fourteenth, to join the Mediterranean and Atlantic ſeas. The Saracens who conquered this part of France during the decay of the Roman empire, are ſaid to have been its founders. In a valley about half a mile from the place, is the ſpot where the unfortunate duke of Montmorenci, cover'd with wounds, and thrown from his horſe, was taken priſoner, in 1632. I lamented as I ſtood over it, the fate of ſo heroic and ſo amiable a prince. He was the Ruſſel of France, who fell a ſacrifice to the ſtern and unrelenting policy of the Cardinal de Richlieu. The grandſon of that conſtable Montmorenci, who expired in arms for the defence of the monarchy, under Charles the ninth, at ſeventy-ſeven years of age; ſon to Henry d'Amville, Conſtable of France under Henry the fourth; he himſelf of a character the moſt elevated, munificent, and benevolent; leſs guilty,

guilty, even in his oppoſition to Louis the thirteenth, than was Gaſton duke of Orleans; and, tho' an enemy of the miniſter, yet guiltleſs of rebellion againſt his ſovereign.—How many circumſtances to extenuate his crime! I have ever conſidered this execution as one of thoſe which tarniſh in the higheſt degree the great name of Richlieu, and, amid all the ſplendor of his public actions, force us to abhor the man.

It is about five-and-twenty miles from Caſtelnaudari to Carcaſſonne, where I ſtaid the remainder of the enſuing day. Carcaſſonne conſiſts of two diſtinct cities, ſeparated by the little river Aude. The moſt ancient of theſe, called "La Haute Ville," ſtands on the ſummit of a hill; the lower town, which is in the plain, is the largeſt, and both are ſurrounded with Gothic walls, battlements and turrets, which are in the moſt perfect preſervation. This place bore a conſiderable ſhare in that celebrated cruſade undertaken againſt the Albigenſes in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and which forms one of the moſt aſtoniſhing inſtances of ſuperſtition and of

atrocious

atrocious barbarity to be found in the annals of the world.

When the royal power was nearly annihilated, during the reigns of the laſt kings of the Carlovingian race in France, moſt of the cities of Languedoc erected themſelves into little independent ſtates, governed by their own princes. Carcaſſonne was then under the dominion of Viſcounts. At the time when pope Innocent the third patronized and commanded the proſecution of hoſtilities againſt the Albigenſes for the crime of hereſy, Raymond the reigning Viſcount was included in that proſcription. Simon de Montfort, general of the army of the church, inveſted the city of Carcaſſonne in 1209. The inhabitants, terrified at the fate of ſeveral other places where the moſt dreadful maſſacres had been committed, demanded leave to capitulate; but this act of mercy was only extended to them under a condition, equally cruel, incredible, and unparalleled in hiſtory, if we were not compelled to believe it by the unanimous teſtimony of all the contemporary writers. The people found in the place, were all obliged, without diſtinction of rank or ſex, to evacuate

it in a ſtate of nudity; and Agnes the Viſcounteſs, was not exempted, tho' young and beautiful, from this ignominious and ſhocking puniſhment. "On les fit ſortir tout nuds "de la Ville de Carcaſſonne (ſays an ancient "author) afin qu'ils receuſſent de la honte, en "montrant ces parties du corps que la pureté "de la langue n'exprime point, deſquelles "ils avoient abuſé, et s'en étoient ſervis dans "des crimes execrables." It ſeems by this imputation, that the Albigeois were accuſed by their enemies of ſome enormities, probably unjuſt, and ſimilar to thoſe which religious enmity and prejudice have attributed to the followers of Zinzendorf in the preſent century.

I continued my journey on Saturday to Narbonne; the country from Toulouſe to the gates of that city is very unpleaſant; it is a vaſt plain, open, naked, and in many parts barren, where ſcarce a tree is to be ſeen except olives, and even thoſe are neither large nor numerous. On one hand appear the Pyrenees at a conſiderable diſtance; and on the other, the chain of rocks, called the Black Mountains, which divide Languedoc from the

province

province of Rouergue. The weather was cold, and I found it difficult to procure a miserable fire made of vine twigs, and roots of olives. The population is very thin, and the appearance of the country bleak and inhospitable. I went about a league out of the road near Carcassonne, to a little town called Trebé, where the "Royal Canal" passes over the river Aude, and arriv'd at Narbonne in the afternoon.

I must own that I was infinitely disappointed in that city, which retains scarce any marks of its ancient grandeur. Narbonne, which pretends to the most remote antiquity under the Celtic kings, in ages anterior even to the Roman conquests; which under these latter masters, gave its name to all the "Gallia "Narbonensis," and was a colony of the first consideration, is now dwindled to a wretched, solitary town, containing scarce eight thousand inhabitants, of whom three fourths are priests and women. The streets and buildings are mean and ruinous; it has indeed, a communication with the Mediterranean, from which Narbonne is only about three leagues distant, by means of a small river which intersects the place;

place; but their commerce is very limited, and chiefly consists in grain which they export to Cette and Marseilles. No marks of Roman magnificence remain, except several inscriptions in different parts of the city; and if the churches did not keep employed some hundred ecclesiastics, who are occupied in the beneficial duties of chanting requiems and vespers, it would probably cease in a few years to have any existence whatever.

The See of Narbonne, which is archiepiscopal, is said to have been founded by Charlemagne, but the present cathedral is far more modern, tho' only the choir of it remains, which is built in the finest style of the Gothic edifices. In the center of the church, before the high altar, is the tomb of Philip the Bold, king of France, son of St. Louis. It is composed of white marble, and the king is represented lying at full length, his head reposing on a cushion ornamented with fleurs de lis. His face is that of a man in the prime of life, the features regular and pleasing; he has a beard on the upper lip and chin, and his hair falls in great quantity on his neck. In his right hand is the Dalmatique, resembling a pastoral staff; and in the left

left he holds a ſceptre, and a hand of juſtice. He has a crown on his head, and his feet reſt on a lion. Behind, in the old black letter, is this inſcription.

" Sepultura bonæ Memoriæ
" Philippi,
" quondam Francorum Regis,
" Filii beati Ludovici,
" qui Perpignani calida Febre
" ab hac Luce migravit,
" 3 Non: Octobris,
" Anno Dni 1285."

You may perhaps recollect that Philip died at forty-five years of age, on his return from an ill concerted and unfortunate expedition againſt the king of Arragon. The body was brought here from Perpignan, and the bones having been ſeparated by boiling water from the fleſh, they were carried to St. Denis and there interred.

The diſtance from Narbonne to this city is twenty miles. The mountain of Malpas, which was cut through, to admit the paſſage of the "Royal Canal," lies only a mile out of the road. It was impoſſible to paſs ſo extraordinary and celebrated a work without viſiting

viſiting it. The effect produced by it on the ſpectator is very ſtriking, and ſublime. I deſcended by a large flight of ſteps into the excavation, and walked through the mountain along the ſide of the canal. The length of it is exactly two hundred and ten paces, or more than ſix hundred feet; and the perpendicular heighth from the water to the ſurface of the incumbent mountain is two hundred and two feet. A great part of the arch has been vaulted at a prodigious expence, from the dread of its falling in from the weight above; and the annual neceſſary repairs amount to a large ſum of money. The breadth of the canal itſelf is at leaſt twenty feet; and tho' the diſtance hollowed through the ground is ſo conſiderable, yet the light is every where perfectly admitted. This was the greateſt obſtacle to completing the junction of the two ſeas, and its execution has immortalized the famous Riquet, whom Louis the fourteenth employed in the enterprize. He was made Count de Caraman, and his deſcendants yet enjoy the title.

I arrived here laſt night. Beziers is an opulent and conſiderable city, containing above twenty

twenty thousand inhabitants, and situated in a delicious country. It occupies all the sides of a very steep and lofty hill, on the highest point of which is built the cathedral. At the foot runs the river Orbe. The prospect is extensive and beautiful, bounded to the north by mountains, and terminated on the south by the Mediterranean. It is esteemed one of the most plentiful and eligible places of residence in the kingdom, all the necessaries and elegancies of life being procured here at the most moderate prices.

Beziers is said to have been a "Statio "Romana," and was used by them as a place of arms. The siege which happened during the crusade against the Albigenses, was one of the most memorable and bloody which distinguished that flagitious war. The garrison defended it with determined bravery; and every other means having failed in the attempt for it's reduction on the part of the besiegers, a resolution was taken to storm the city. The papal Nuncio, assisted by Gusman the Spaniard who is better known in ecclesiastical history under the name of St. Dominic, exhorted the troops to behave with

courage

courage in this pious enterprize, and promifed them remiffion from all their paft offences. After a long and obftinate ftruggle, Beziers was entered by the victorious foldiery, who maffacred in cold blood, fixty thoufand of the wretched inhabitants, without diftinction of fex, rank, or age, and afterwards reduced the city to afhes. I leave to your own mind to make the natural reflections on this horrid cataftrophe. I do not permit myfelf to comment on fuch an event, to which there are but too many fimilar in the hiftory of the Romifh church. That religion has doubtlefs ever been unfavorable and unpropitious to the happinefs of the human race, which nourifhes in its effence the feeds of theological controverfy, and metaphyfical fubtilties; difputes, which however contemptible in themfelves, neceffarily produce that fpirit of intoleration and perfecution, which uniform experience proves to be the certain confequence in modern ages, of a difference in opinion on facred fubjects. Happy the Romans and the Greeks, who eftablifhed no crufades to convert the provinces which they fubdued! who maffacred no people for their adherence to the

ſuperſtition of their anceſtors, who knew no points of ſcholaſtic or polemical divinity; but who with open arms received the gods of the conquered nations, and admitted Iſis and the dog Anubis, to a place in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus!

Edward the Black Prince laid ſiege to Beziers in 1355, but without ſucceſs. He ravaged all this part of Languedoc, and advanced even as far as Fabrigues, a little town only two leagues diſtant from Montpelier. There he halted; and whether from an apprehenſion of being intercepted in his retreat, or that his army was ſatiated with booty, began his march back into Guienne. He burnt the ſuburbs of Narbonne and Carcaſſonne in his way, ſpread terror through all the neighbouring provinces, and conducted his ſoldiers in triumph to Bourdeaux, laden with ſpoils.

The cathedral of Beziers contains nothing remarkable, except the tomb of the Princeſs Blanche of France. Philip of Valois her father, at the age of fifty-ſix, fell in love with Blanche d'Evreux, the moſt beautiful princeſs in Europe. She was only ſixteen

years old; but this disproportion in their ages did not prevent the nuptials. The King enjoyed his bride a very short time; and died the ensuing year, of the same disease which proved fatal to Louis the twelfth, king of France, and to Don John, son to Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain. The queen was left with child, and brought into the world some months afterwards the princess Blanche, who when she had attained her twentieth year, was betrothed to the Count of Barcelona, but died at this city, on her journey into Catalonia.

I leave Beziers this afternoon. Meanwhile, adieu!

Tarafcon on the Rhone,
Tuefday, 21ft November, 1775.

MONTPELIER is a delightful place of refidence. I ftaid there four days, and left it with exceffive regret. The town itfelf is by no means beautiful, the ftreets being almoft all narrow, winding, and badly laid out; but Nature feems to have chofen the hill on which it ftands, to enrich with her choiceft favours. The afcent is eafy and gradual on every fide; and the ftates of Languedoc have ornamented the fummit of it at a vaft expence, in a manner where tafte and magnificence are equally blended.

The profpect from this happy fpot I cannot defcribe, though I ftudied it every day with an enthufiaftic pleafure. Raphael's pencil, or that of Lorraine might paint it, but not even Shakefpeare's powers of defcription could do juftice to its beauties. The vales of Languedoc, covered with olives, or laid out in vineyards, are finely contrafted with rude rocks to the north, and melt away into the fea to the fouth. Tho' winter has almoft ftripped the trees of their verdure, there is nothing

nothing melancholy or desart which presents itself to the eye. A sky serene and unclouded, an invigorating sun, a keen and wholesome air spread a gaiety over November itself, which here is neither accompanied with fogs or rain. Montpelier has notwithstanding lost, within these last thirty years, that reputation for salubrity which conduces more to the support of a place, than any real advantages it may possess; and the number of strangers who visit it from motives of health diminishes annually. Some trade is still carried on from thence by a small river called the Les, which empties itself into the sea at the distance of a league; but the Mediterranean has been retiring these three centuries from the whole coast of Languedoc and Provence. Frejus, which is situated between Toulon and Antibes, where the emperor Augustus laid up his gallies after the battle of Actium, is now become an inland city.

You doubtless remember in history the celebrated interview of Charles the fifth and Francis the first at Aigues-mortes, in 1535. That place is at present half a league from the shore, and has consequently lost all its

ancient commerce, which was very extenſive. This event, which took place early in the laſt century, induced the Cardinal de Richlieu, who was ever attentive to the grandeur and emolument of the ſtate, to conſtruct a port at Agde, which he effected. The remedy was only temporary, as the cauſe ſtill ſubſiſted; and before the year 1670, the harbour of Agde by the retreat of the ſea, was rendered almoſt uſeleſs. Colbert then undertook to build the town of Cette, from which place all the commodities brought down the "Royal Canal" might be exported, and the province of Languedoc be ſupplied with a port, of which otherwiſe it is totally deſtitute. I am aſſured, that the abſolute neceſſity of having a maritime town at the mouth of the canal has alone hitherto prevented Cette from ſharing the fate of Agde, as the annual expence of clearing the harbour amounts to a hundred thouſand livres; and even theſe precautions cannot hinder the ſand from obſtructing the entrance, and forming a bar acroſs it in a ſeries of years. Montpelier owed its elevation chiefly to this very circumſtance, as the epiſcopal ſee was originally at Maguelonne, a town on the ſhore

of

of the Mediterranean; but that place declining, from the retreat of the ſea, Pope Paul the third transferred it thither in 1536.

The country from Montpelier to Niſmes, is a garden, level, and every where cultivated. The peaſants are juſt beginning to gather the olives, which are very numerous, and the trees are planted with the ſame regularity as our orchards in England. I cannot but envy the inhabitants this genial climate and theſe fertile plains, and am ready to accuſe Nature of partiality in the infinite difference which ſhe has placed between the peaſant of Languedoc and of Sweden. In vain will you tell me that the Amor Patriæ, the attachment we naturally bear to that country where we were born, renders them equally happy, and extinguiſhes all other diſtinctions. I know the force of this principle; I feel and cultivate it with the greateſt ardour—but it cannot blind me to the infinite ſuperiority with which certain countries of the earth are endowed, above other leſs favoured latitudes and regions.

I paſſed three days at Niſmes in the ſurvey of thoſe magnificent and beautiful remains of Roman greatneſs which yet ſubſiſt there.

They have been deſcribed a thouſand times, and it is not my intention to fatigue you with a repetition of them. The Amphitheatre, and the "maiſon quarrée," are known throughout every kingdom of Europe. The firſt of theſe impreſſes the beholder with the deepeſt veneration; the latter excites the moſt elegant and refined delight. Indignation againſt the barbarians who could violate and deface theſe glorious monuments of antiquity, will mix with the ſenſations of every ſpectator. One can ſcarce believe that Charles Martel, from hatred to the Roman name, had the ſavage fury to fill the corridores of the amphitheatre with wood, to which he ſet fire with an intent to injure, tho' it ſurpaſſed his power to demoliſh, ſo vaſt an edifice. Yet notwithſtanding theſe attempts of the barbarous nations, notwithſtanding the lapſe of ſo many ages, and the effects of time, its appearance at preſent is the moſt auguſt and majeſtic which can be preſented to the mind, or to the ſenſes. The prodigious circumference of the amphitheatre, the ſolidity and ſtrength of its conſtruction, the awful majeſty of ſo vaſt a pile, half perfect, half in ruin, impreſs one with a tumult of

ſentiments

ſentiments which it is difficult to convey to you by any deſcription.—The "maiſon "quarrée," is in the moſt complete preſervation, and appears to me to be the moſt perfect piece of architecture in the world. The order is the Corinthian, and all the beauties of that elegant ſtyle ſeem to be exhauſted in its conſtruction. This ſuperb temple is now converted into a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, ornamented with gilding, and other holy finery, ſuitable to ſuch an alteration.

At a quarter of a mile from the city of Niſmes is another temple, much decayed, which immemorial tradition relates to have been conſecrated to Diana; but which by antiquaries is generally ſuppoſed to have been ſacred to the "Dii infernales," as it is evident that no light was admitted into it, a circumſtance peculiar to the temples of the infernal Gods. In the inſide, are numbers of mutilated ſtatues, marbles, capitals, and inſcriptions, which have been found there from time to time. Cloſe to it riſes a fountain, which may vie with that of Vaucluſe in beauty, tho' not in fame. It furniſhes a

great quantity of water, which never diminishes in the longest droughts; but as the channel thro' which it flows had become obstructed in a series of ages by sand and gravel, the inhabitants of Nismes undertook some years ago to cleanse and restore its course. In the progress of this work they discovered a number of Roman coins, rings, and other antiquities, several of which are equally rare and well preserved. On the summit of the rock from whence the fountain issues, stands a building which has much exercised the opinions of the learned. It is incontestibly Roman, and is vulgarly called "La Tour magne." Its exposed situation has conduced to hasten its decay; but at what time it was built, or for what purposes it served, are now totally unknown.

Nismes is an ill-built place, containing in itself nothing extraordinary or remarkable. A hundred fables are related concerning its origin, which is carried into times anterior by many centuries to the Roman conquests; and it probably does not occupy at present the fourth part of the ground on which it formerly stood. I left Nismes this afternoon. The distance

tance is only twenty miles from this place; but the wind blew ſuch a hurricane, as I ſcarce ever remember. The paſſage acroſs the Rhone at Taraſcon, which divides Provence from Languedoc, is over a bridge of boats; and I own I paſſed it with ſome apprehenſions, as they aſſure me it is not uncommon for carriages to be carried over into the river by violent guſts of wind.

The view of the Rhone here is very picturesque. On one ſide in Languedoc, ſtands Beaucaire, a conſiderable town, with a ruined caſtle overhanging a rock; on this ſide is ſituated Taraſcon, with a correſpondent caſtle, far more conſiderable, and waſhed by the waves. The river here is much broader than the Thames at London.

To-morrow I proceed for Aix and Marſeilles.

A TOUR

Marſeilles, 5th January, 1776.

I Scarce ever remember even in our northern climate, a colder day than that on which I continued my journey from Taraſcon to this city. Winter ſeem'd to have taken poſſeſſion of the face of nature before its time. The olive-trees were covered with ſnow which fell very faſt, and the "Bize" which blew in my face, and came from the ſummits of the Alps, rendered the weather extremely ſevere.—At St. Remi, a little town only four leagues from Taraſcon, I drove about a mile out of the road, to ſee the remains of the monuments erected by the Conſul Marius as trophies of his victory gained over the Cimbri and Teutones. Tho' ſo many ages have elapſed ſince their conſtruction, they yet forcibly recall the idea of Rome, the conqueror of the earth, and queen of nations.

It was night when I arrived at Aix, where I ſtaid three days. The city has that air of ſilence and gloom ſo commonly characteriſtic of places deſtitute of commerce or induſtry, and forms a ſtriking contraſt to Marſeilles,

where

where opulence and population are every where viſible. The warm ſprings from which it is now known and frequented, induced Sextius Calvinus to found a Roman colony there, to which he gave the name of "Aquæ Sextiæ." They were ſuppoſed, probably with reaſon, to poſſeſs particular virtues in caſes of debility; and ſeveral altars have been dug up ſacred to Priapus, the inſcriptions on which indicate their gratitude to that deity for his ſuppoſed ſuccour and aſſiſtance. I ſaw nothing in the cathedral deſerving attention except the tomb of Charles of Anjou, laſt of the great Angevin line, Kings of Naples, and Counts of Provence. He died, if I recollect right, in 1483, and bequeathed both his real and titular dominions to Louis the eleventh, king of France. The claims on the Neapolitan crown derived from him, were the foundation of thoſe long and unhappy wars begun by Charles the eighth, and continued under his two ſucceſſors.

The diſtance from Aix to this city is only twenty miles. There is notwithſtanding, a conſiderable difference in the climate of Marſeilles, which is milder in winter, and cooler

during the heats of ſummer, from its vicinity to the Mediterranean. Nature ſeems to have marked out this place for commerce, by the advantages ſhe has beſtowed on it. The entrance of the harbour, which is extremely narrow and ſurrounded by lofty mountains, protects and ſhelters veſſels during the moſt violent ſtorms. The port itſelf forms a delightful walk at this ſeaſon of the year, as it is open to the ſouthern ſun, and crowded with vaſt numbers of people, not only of all the European nations, but of Turks, Greeks, and natives of the coaſt of Barbary. The whole ſcene is one of the moſt agreeable that can be imagined, if the chains of the galley ſlaves heard among the hum of buſineſs, did not tincture it with the hateful idea of ſlavery. The gallies themſelves, uſeleſs and neglected, rot peaceably in their reſpective ſtations; and it is ſaid that no others will ever be conſtructed to ſupply their place, as they have long ceaſed to be of any utility to the ſtate, and are ſcarcely even navigable in ſevere weather.

During the ſhort reſidence I have made here, I am yet forcibly ſtruck with the wide difference

ference between the genius of the Provençaux, and that generally attributed to the French. The common people have a brutality and rudeneſs of manners more characteriſtic of a republican, than of a monarchical and abſolute government. Their language, ſo famous in ancient romance, is a corrupt Italian, more intelligible to a Neapolitan than to a Pariſian. The women are lively, beautiful, and diſpoſed from their complexion to gallantry. A fire, an extreme vivacity unknown to the northern nations of Europe, and which reſults from a penetrating air, a genial ſun, and ſkies for ever blue, is ſtrongly diſcernible in their eyes, their converſation, the peculiar dances and muſic of the country; in all which a warm and impaſſioned animation forms the predominant quality. I am afraid to expreſs how many charms there appear to me in this gaiety of character and diſpoſition, leſt you ſhould think I mean to contraſt it with the formality of our own country, where we ſeldom allow the heart to act uninfluenced by the judgment.

Marſeilles pretends to the moſt remote antiquity, a colony of Phocians in ages un-

known, having given it birth. The "old "city" is one of the moſt ill built of any in Europe, nor have I ever had courage enough to penetrate into its receſſes, which are inſupportably filthy. The modern Marſeilles has ſprung up ſince the commencement of the eighteenth century, and has all that regularity, elegance, and convenience, which diſtinguiſh the preſent times. I am inclined to conſider it as one of the moſt eligible places of winter reſidence in the world, and far ſuperior, where health is not an object of attention, to Nice or Montpelier. In the carnival, I am aſſured, that it is uncommonly gay. The ſurrounding country is rocky and barren, but covered for ſeveral miles on all ſides, with villas and ſummer houſes, which commerce has erected.

The intention I once had of viſiting Corſica and Sardinia, I have relinquiſhed, chiefly on account of the few objects of entertainment or information which thoſe iſlands offer to the mind; and I have determined to remain here till the enſuing ſpring, when I ſhall probably return through the inland provinces of this kingdom to England. Meanwhile I remain, &c.

Clermont, in Auvergne,
Friday, 26th of April, 1776.

AFTER a ſilence of near four months, I again reſume my pen from among the mountains of Auvergne, at the diſtance of more than a hundred leagues from Marſeilles. I have now exchanged the delicious climate of Provence, its warm ſun, and the ſhore of the Mediterranean, for a very different ſcene.

I quitted Marſeilles on the ſixth of this month, and arrived at Avignon the evening of the enſuing day. It was impoſſible for me not to dedicate ſome time to the view of a city ſo renowned in paſt ages, the ſeat of the ſovereign Pontiffs during more than half a century, the reſidence of Petrarch, and the birth-place of Laura. I felt that pleaſure which reſults to every reflecting mind, from the conſciouſneſs of being on a ſpot rendered famous by poetry, or genius, or great atchievements. I compared Avignon, as it now exiſts, with the picture which Petrarch has drawn of it in his writings, and attempted

to aſcertain the ſituation of his miſtreſs's abode, which is yet pointed out by tradition in one of the ſuburbs. I went to the church of the Cordeliers, where reſt her remains. In a little dark chapel on the right hand, now diſuſed for religious ceremonies, damp, cold, and unwholeſome, beneath the arch which forms the entrance, and under a plain ſtone, lies that Laura who was once ſo beautiful, and who can never die while her lover's fame and works ſurvive. Round the ſtone are ſome ancient Gothic characters covered with earth, and rendered illegible by time. You will perhaps recollect that Francis the firſt, the moſt accompliſhed prince who ever reigned in France, and who eminently poſſeſſed the enthuſiaſm which uſually diſtinguiſhes and characteriſes genius, cauſed the tomb of Laura to be opened in his own preſence. A wiſh to pervade the obſcurity in which Petrarch has affected to involve the name of his miſtreſs, and the hiſtory of his own unhappy paſſion; added to a deſire of aſcertaining by ſome inconteſtible proof the burial-place of Laura, were the motives which influenced Francis to commit this ſeeming violation of the

repoſe

repoſe of the dead. Some ſmall human bones, ſuppoſed to be her's, and a leaden box which contained a ſcrowl of Italian verſes obſcurely alluding to Petrarch's attachment to her, were all which repaid the monarch's curioſity. It is needleſs to remind you, that Laura died of the plague which deſolated the greater part of Europe in 1347 and the following year, and of which Boccace has drawn the moſt animated and diſtreſsful picture which can be held up to the human imagination.

It ſeems impoſſible to recognize the ſituation or adjacent country of Avignon as they appear at preſent, under the melancholy colours with which Petrarch has ſhaded them. The fertile plain of the "Comtat Venaiſſin" in which the city ſtands, and the rich banks of the Rhone, are deſcribed by him as a frightful deſart, through which pours a river ſwept by continual winds and tempeſts. Ovid has given us the ſame horrible idea of the coaſt of the Black Sea, a climate inconteſtably one of the fineſt of the earth, and bleſſed with an almoſt perpetual ſpring. The gloomy medium thro' which the two poets regarded every object, explains this extraordinary fact.

The

The latter, only occupied with the painful recollection of the luxurious pleasures which reigned in the court of Augustus, and from which he was for ever banished, was lost to every sense of joy or delight. Petrarch, an exile from Italy his native country, always cherishing the fond idea of revisiting Florence, and despising the manners, while he detested the city of Avignon, set no bounds to his exclamations and complaints. Neither the distinguished favour of several succeeding popes with which he was honour'd, nor the consideration of its being the spot which gave birth to his mistress Laura, could soften or diminish his antipathy to Avignon.——For me, who viewed it impartially, and without prejudice, I confess I was charmed with the situation. The prospect from the summit of the rock in the center of the city is of uncommon beauty. The "Vent de Bize," which blew in my face, was indeed extremely severe, but I comforted myself, that tho' piercing, it was yet wholesome, and that if Louis the eleventh, when in a state of debility had ordered intercessions to Heaven to avert it, Augustus, on the other hand, was so well convinced of the

salubrious

ſalubrious and invigorating qualities of that wind, that he erected an altar to it, and ordered it to be placed among the Gods.

The Rhone itſelf is a noble object, rolling rapidly through meadows covered with olive trees, and divided into two conſiderable channels oppoſite to Avignon. Acroſs it, extend the ruinous and decayed arches of that bridge, againſt which Madame de Grignan was ſo near being loſt, and of which Madame de Sevigné makes terrified mention. It was demoliſhed in 1699, by one of the inundations common to the Rhone. When entire, it was not leſs than a quarter of a mile in length; but being ſo narrow as not to permit two carriages to paſs in any part, it had previouſly become almoſt uſeleſs; and motives of policy prevent the conſtruction of a new bridge, while Avignon belongs, as it ſtill does, to the papal ſee.——On the farther ſide of the Rhone, in Languedoc, ſtands Ville Neuve, a conſiderable town, with a magnificent monaſtery of Benedictins on a rock, correſpondent to that on which is built the cathedral of Avignon. The high mountain of Ventoux, in the province of Dauphiné, covered with ſnow, and which

which Petrarch has deſcribed, appears to the north; and the ſavage rocks of Vaucluſe bound the view to the eaſtward, at the diſtance of fifteen miles. Beneath ſpreads an extenſive vale, water'd by ſeveral rivulets which loſe themſelves in the Rhone, and which is cultivated with the utmoſt induſtry.

The city of Avignon itſelf is in general ill built, irregular, and devoid of beauty; but the Gothic walls and ramparts with which it has been ſurrounded by different pontiffs, are well preſerved, and are an object of high curioſity. I recollect none ſo perfect in any part of France. Several popes and antipopes, who during their lives ſhook the Romiſh church with violence and mutual altercation, repoſe quietly near each other, in the various monaſteries of the place; and in that of the Cordeliers, almoſt oppoſite to Laura's, is the tomb of the brave Grillon, ſo well known for his invincible courage, as well as for his unſhaken attachment to his ſovereign, Henry the fourth.

You will not doubt that I viſited the fountain of Vaucluſe, immortalized by Petrarch, and to which he ſo often retired to indulge

his grief and hopelefs love. It is only five leagues diftant from Avignon, and as I fet out early in the morning, I reached the entrance of the valley about ten o'clock. I got out of my carriage, and walked along the banks of the Sorgue, for fo the river is called which iffues from the fountain. Meadows of the moft lively green fkirt its fides, above which rife abrupt and lofty rocks, that feem defigned to feclude it from human view. The valley becomes gradually narrower toward the extremity, and winding continually defcribes the figure of a horfe-fhoe. The view is at length terminated by an enormous mafs of rock, forming a barrier acrofs it, of a prodigious heighth, and abfolutely perpendicular. Through its vaft receffes run the ftreams which fupply the fountain of Vauclufe, and at its foot appears a bafon of water, feveral hundred feet in circumference, ftretched like an expanfe, filent and quiet. The fides are very fteep, and it is faid that in the middle no bottom can be difcovered; tho' attempts have been often made for that purpofe; a circumftance probably refulting from the violence with which the fprings bubble up, which prevents

vents any weight from defcending beyond a certain depth. Tho' the fountain is clearer in itfelf than cryftal, yet the incumbent rock cafts a continual fhade, approaching to black, over its furface. The water efcaping from this ftate of inaction by a narrow paffage, is immediately precipitated in a cafcade down a rocky channel, where it foams over a number of vaft, detached ftones, which intercept and impede its progrefs. They are covered with a deep green mofs of many ages, and have probably tumbled from the mountains that overhang the torrent. The rocks themfelves, which furround and inveft this romantic fpot, are worn by time, and the inclemency of the weather, into a thoufand extraordinary and fantaftic forms, to which imagination gives fhape and figure. On one of the pointed extremities, and in a fituation which appears almoft inacceffible, are feen the remains of an ancient caftle, projecting over the water. The peafants call it "Il caftello di Petrar-"ca," and add, with great fimplicity, that Laura lived upon the oppofite fide of the river, under the bed of which was a fubterranean paffage by which the two lovers vifited

each

each other. Nothing is however more certain than that theſe are the ruins of the Chateau belonging to the lords or Seigneurs of Avignon; and the biſhop of Cavaillon reſided in it during the frequent viſits which he uſed to make to Petrarch.——The poet's dwelling was much lower down, and nearer to the bank of the Sorgue, as evidently appears from his minute deſcription of it, and the relation he gives of his quarrel with the Naiads of the ſtream, who encroached during the winter on his little adjoining territory. No remains of it are now to be diſcerned.

I ſat down on the edge of the baſon, to conſider the ſcene, and the romantic aſſemblage of objects which preſented themſelves on every ſide. I looked with a mixt ſenſation of pleaſure and of pain, upon the valley and the fountain which had been ſo often witneſſes to Petrarch's complaints, and hopeleſs paſſion. I attempted to diſcern the cavern, which, during the ſummer, when the waters of Vaucluſe are low, opens into the receſſes of the rock, and where he uſed alone, in the dead of night, to indulge his deſpair. While I was loſt in theſe reflections, the day darkened,

and

and a ſudden ſtorm of rain, from which I was completely ſheltered by the incumbent mountain, iſſuing from a collection of black clouds overhanging the ſpot, ſpread through the whole landſcape a majeſtic and awful ſublimity. When it was paſt, I retir'd, tho' reluctantly, from this beautiful and celebrated ſolitude.

Before I got into my carriage, the peaſant who had attended me to the fountain, conducted me to a houſe ſituated in the valley, where are ſtill preſerved two portraits of the lovers who have rendered Vaucluſe immortal. My chief attention was directed to that of Laura. She appears to be in the earlieſt bloom of youth, ſuch as ſhe is deſcribed by Petrarch on that morning when he firſt beheld her. An air of playful gaiety ſeems diffuſed over her countenance. Her eyes are large and of a deep hazel, her noſe juſtly proportioned, and the contour of her face a perfect oval. Her hair, the colour of which approaches to yellow, is confined by a fillet braided and adorned with pearls; over her neck is a faint ſhade of gauze; her robe is of a pale red, and her arms are covered with

a ſort

a ſort of glove which deſcends half way the hands. In one of them ſhe holds an amaranth, the emblem of immortality.——Petrarch is painted as in middle life, of an engaging figure, and his brows bound with laurel.

I return'd to Avignon in the evening, and quitted it on the morning of the enſuing day. At Orange where I breakfaſted, it was impoſſible not to dedicate an hour to the remains of the Roman theatre, and the triumphal arch of Marius; edifices the moſt auguſt and magnificent, tho' defaced by the lapſe of near two thouſand years, and of which I might be tempted perhaps to give you a deſcription, if it had not already been done by ſo many preceding travellers.——I continued my journey to Lyons along the eaſtern bank of the Rhone. On the other ſide of that river appear the high mountains of the Vivarais covered with ſnow, and to the right are thoſe of Dauphiné extending to the Alps, with which they join. As I advanced north, the weather became more ſharp and piercing, while the "Bize" blew with redoubled keenneſs, and chilled the ſpring which was juſt opening. I arrived at Lyons after three days journey. My road from thence

to this city, lay thro' the provinces of Beaujolois and Forez, the firſt of which, tho' hilly, is finely cultivated. Between Lyons and Roanne I paſſed over the high mountain of Tarare, ſo dreaded in the laſt century. From its ſummit is a prodigious proſpect, only bounded towards Savoy by the Alps, which form a vaſt barrier covered with eternal ſnow. At Roanne I enter'd the Forez, a ſmall province, barren, uncultivated, and thinly inhabited. A chain of lofty mountains extends quite acroſs it; thick foreſts of pine and fir cover the ſteep acclivities, and afford refuge to wolves and wild boars, which are there found in great numbers. Scarce a hamlet is ſeen in ſeveral miles; and the ſilence, the depopulation, and romantic ſolitudes thro' which I paſs'd, ſtrongly reminded me of Sweden or Finland.

I arrived on Wedneſday at Thiers, a conſiderable town ſituated on the ſteep ſide of a mountain, from whence is beheld a moſt delicious landſcape. The country extends for many leagues on all ſides, in a cultivated plain, terminated by another range of mountains, and Clermont itſelf is diſtinctly ſeen at the

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the diſtance of five-and-twenty miles. This rich tract of the Auvergne is denominated "La Limagne," and forms a baſon completely ſurrounded by rocks and hills. The ſoil is uncommonly fertile, and inferior to no part of France. Several fine ſtreams interſect it, and add to the beauty of the ſcene.

I got to this place yeſterday. The ſituation of Clermont is agreeable, on a gentle eminence, the aſcent to which is gradual and eaſy. The city itſelf within the walls, ſeems to have been built in an age the moſt barbarous, the ſtreets being ſo narrow and winding that no carriage can enter them, and the buildings are of correſpondent antiquity; but to compenſate for theſe inconveniences, the ſuburbs are charming, and the houſes modern and elegant. I viſited this morning the petrifying ſpring, which Charles the ninth of France is ſaid to have ſurveyed with ſo much pleaſure and admiration. It is only a quarter of a mile from the town. In a courſe of ages, the ſpring has formed a ridge of ſtone or incruſtation not leſs than ſixteen feet in height, above a hundred feet long, and in ſome parts near ten in thickneſs. As it impeded, and at

length totally ſtopped the current of a little rivulet which interſected its courſe, the inhabitants were obliged to dig a paſſage through it. The ſtream is now directed into another channel, and has begun to form a new bridge acroſs the rivulet into which it falls.

It was my intention to have penetrated farther into this romantic province, but the ſeaſon is too early to permit me to aſcend any of the higheſt mountains of Auvergne. I ſhould however certainly have gone to Uſſon, which is only ten leagues diſtant, if any remains of the caſtle ſtill exiſted. I ſcarcely need remind you that Margaret of Valois, wife to Henry the fourth, was ſhut up in it during twenty years. A gentleman who reſides at Iſſoire near the ſpot, gave me this deſcription of it.

" The caſtle of Uſſon ſtood upon the ſum-
" mit of an almoſt inacceſſible rock, at the
" foot of which flowed a little river. The
" queen, by a maſterly piece of addreſs, ex-
" pelled the Marquis de Canillac, to whoſe
" cuſtody ſhe was confided, and rendered her-
" ſelf miſtreſs of the place. It has been de-
" moliſhed by time, and the rude hands of
" the

"the neighbouring peaſants, who have re-
"moved almoſt all the ſtones which compoſed
"the caſtle. Some ruins of it yet remain
"in the laſt ſtage of decay, which the
"vulgar apprehend to have been formerly
"ſacred to religious purpoſes, and which
"they denominate, 'Les Chapelles de la
"Reine Marguerite.' It is true that they
"were conſtructed by that Queen; but ſhe
"had dedicated them to pleaſure, not to de-
"votion, and gave rendezvous in theſe
"apartments to the neighbouring nobility of
"Auvergne. No other traces remain at this
"time of Uſſon."

My letter is already of an immoderate length; I ſhall only add to it, that I am yours, &c.

Bourges in Berri, 6th of May, 1776.

I Left Clermont ſooner than I had intended, in compliance with an invitation which I could not refuſe, to paſs ſome time at the Chateau de P—— belonging to the Count de L——. The houſe is ſituated in an unfrequented part of Auvergne, towards the confines of the Bourbonnois, on a riſing ground, which commands an enchanting proſpect. Through the plain below, flows the river Allier, mentioned in terms of ſuch lively admiration by Madame de Sevigné, and on whoſe banks, ſhe ſays, might yet be diſcovered ſome of the ſhepherds of fiction and romance. Monſieur de L—— was not at home, and I was received by the Counteſs in a manner the moſt noble and polite. She did me the honour to detain me five days, which I paſſed in a way never to be eraſed from my remembrance. I would deſcribe to you her perſon, but that I ſhall give you a more juſt idea of it in ſaying that ſhe ſtrikingly reſembled the portrait of the duchеſs of Mazarin, as drawn by the Abbé de

de St. Real. Her other accompliſhments were not inferior to her beauty; and when ſhe danced the Bourrée, (a dance peculiar to Auvergne,) I thought Hortenſia Mancini could not have been comparable to Madame de L——. I took my leave of her with that reluctance, natural to a perſon impreſſed with pleaſure and reſpect.

At Montpenſier, I ſtopped to view the mount where formerly ſtood the caſtle, now totally demoliſhed, and which is rendered famous in hiſtory by the death of Louis the eighth, king of France, and father of St. Louis. He died there in 1226, on his return from the ſiege of Avignon, and as was commonly ſuppoſed, of poiſon adminiſtered to him by the Count de Champagne.

I arrived the enſuing day at Moulins, which ſtands in a fine plain cloſe to the river Allier, along the ſides of which are planted walks of elm, poplar and aſpin. The city, tho' the capital of the province of Bourbonnois, is mean and ill built. I went immediately on my arrival, to the church of the nunnery of the Viſitation, to ſee the Mauſoleum of Henry Duke of Montmorenci, of

whom I have already had occaſion more than once to make mention. It was erected to his memory by the Ducheſs, his wife, Marie Felice des Urſins. I looked at this ſuperb monument with ſenſations of the deepeſt pity for the unfortunate hero to whom it was raiſed. Caſtelnaudari, and Leytoure, and Toulouſe, all crowded into my mind.—The tomb itſelf is compoſed of the moſt beautiful and coſtly marbles. The Duke appears in a reclining attitude, his left arm ſupported on his helmet; and by him ſits his widow, her eyes directed to heaven, her hands claſped, and over her whole figure is an expreſſion of diſconſolate ſorrow ſtrongly marked.

It is a delightful ride from Moulins to Nevers, thro' the provinces of Bourbonnois and Nivernois. In the center of Nevers, on the ſummit of a hill, is built the palace of the ancient Dukes. It appears to have been conſtructed in the ſixteenth century, and, tho' beginning to exhibit marks of decay, is yet a model of beauty and delicacy of Gothic architecture. The apartments are hung with tapeſtry of two hundred years old, which have an air of groteſque and rude magnificence.

nificence. I was detained in one of the chambers for ſome minutes, by a portrait of Madame de Monteſpan, who appears riſing from a ſuperb couch, the curtains of which are drawn back, and ſupported by Cupids. Her attitude is half voluptuous, half contemplative. She is dreſſed in a negligent deſhabille, and her hair floats down over her ſhoulders and neck in waving ringlets. Her head reſts on her left hand, and one of her feet is concealed by her robe; the other, which is naked to the mid-leg, and on which the painter, with great taſte has exhauſted all his art, is placed on an embroidered cuſhion. Her ſlippers are thrown careleſsly by. I was charmed with the portrait.

I paſſed the river Loire at La Charité, where I entered the province of Berri; the diſtance from thence to this city is about twelve leagues. The country is much inferior in beauty and cultivation to that between Moulins and Nevers. The far greater part conſiſts in thick woods, or barren heaths deſtitute of inhabitants. Bourges is ſituated in the midſt of a plain, open and level as the ſea. The city is of a very conſiderable ſize,

and of great antiquity, a claim, the validity of which moſt of the buildings evince by the barbariſm of their conſtruction, which marks an age of total rudeneſs and ignorance of the arts. I have ſeen ſcarce a houſe which does not appear to have ſtood many hundred years. ——The "Hotel de Ville" was built by the celebrated Jacques Cœur, ſo well known in the French hiſtory by his greatneſs, his loyalty, his exile, and his misfortunes. Over the portal, is a fine ſtatue of Charles the ſeventh, under whoſe reign he flouriſhed; the king is habited in complete armour, and mounted on horſeback. That prince uſually held his court here; and you will certainly recollect, that during the extreme diſtreſs in which his affairs were involved at the commencement of his reign, the Engliſh, elated with their victories under Henry the fifth, beſtowed on him the contemptuous appellation of "Le petit Roi de Bourges," from the loyal and conſtant attachment which the citizens expreſſed towards him, through every change of fortune.

The tower, denominated "La groſſe tour," in which Louis the twelfth of France,

when

when only Duke of Orleans, was detained a priſoner more than two years by the Lady of Beaujeu, regent under Charles the eighth, exiſts no longer. It was demoliſhed in 1651 during the minority of Louis the fourteenth, by order of Cardinal Mazarin; and a modern building has been conſtructed on the ſpot, from the ſtones which compoſed that edifice.

During my ſtay here, I went to ſee the tomb of Jane of Valois, daughter to Louis the eleventh, and wife to Louis the twelfth, from whom he was divorced, to marry Anne of Bretagne, on his acceſſion to the crown of France. The repudiated princeſs retired to this city, and having dedicated her remaining days to piety, died in the convent of St. Jane, which ſhe had founded. One of the nuns ſhewed me, through the grating, her ſlippers and nuptial robes, which are preſerved with great care; and ſhe added, that innumerable miracles had been performed by her relics and interceſſion.

The cathedral of Bourges is a moſt magnificent edifice, tho' the external architecture of the building does not correſpond in beauty or ſymmetry to its interiour. The church

is of prodigious dimenſions, far exceeding any we have in England, and the quantity of painted glaſs which it contains, is ſcarce inferior to that at Gouda in Holland. John, duke of Berri, and brother to Charles the fifth king of France, lies buried in the ſubterranean chapel under the cathedral, beneath a marble tomb of coſtly workmanſhip. He is too well known in hiſtory under the unhappy reign of Charles the ſixth, his nephew, when the frenzy with which that unfortunate prince was ſeized, gave full ſcope to the intrigues and ambition of his uncles.

Scarce any other objects preſent themſelves to the eye in this city except ruins, and I am almoſt afraid as I walk through the narrow winding ſtreets, that the buildings will fall upon my head. If Charles the ſeventh could revive, I am perſuaded he would perfectly recognize the place, which appears to have undergone very little alteration, or received any embelliſhment, during more than three centuries which have elapſed ſince his death.

Louis the eleventh was born at Bourges, and in the "Hotel de Ville" is a painting deſcriptive of this event. France, under the figure

figure of a woman, appears riſing from her throne to receive the medallion of that monarch, which is preſented to her by the Genius of Berri.

This province, tho' large and naturally fertile, is little cultivated or improved; a circumſtance chiefly reſulting from the want of any navigable river, by which the grain and other productions might be tranſported to different quarters of the kingdom.

To-morrow morning I leave Bourges. From Orleans or Blois you may expect to hear of Yours, &c.

Blois, Tuefday, 14th May, 1776.

I Staid fome hours at Mehun-fur-Yeure in Berri, to contemplate the magnificent remains of the caftle. It is only four leagues diftant from Bourges, and is rendered famous in hiftory by the death of Charles the feventh of France who conftructed it, and who died there in 1461, by a voluntary abftinence from food, caufed by the apprehenfion of being poifoned by his own fon, Louis the eleventh. The fituation of the caftle is not favour'd by nature, and correfponds ill with the grandeur of the ftructure. It ftands in a wide-extended plain, fheltered by deep woods, and at its foot flows the little river Yeure, which dividing at the fpot into feveral ftreams, forms a number of marfhy iflands covered with willows. Tho' the caftle of Mehun has been burnt by lightning, as well as greatly injured by time, and the depredations of the neighbouring peafants, yet its ruins are even now inexpreffibly auguft and beautiful. I vifited every part of it which was acceffible. The great tower is very perfect, and three of the apartments which appear

appear to have been rooms of ſtate, might almoſt be inhabited at preſent. The chamber where, as it is ſaid, the unhappy king expir'd, is in one of the ſmaller towers, the entrance into which is obſtructed by the ſtones which have fallen from above. The whole edifice is compoſed of a ſtone nearly equal to marble in whiteneſs and durability, and is ſurrounded by a deep ditch. In the center ſtands the chapel, the workmanſhip and delicacy of which are aſtoniſhing. The caſtle appears to me to be one of the fineſt monuments now exiſting in Europe of the taſte and ſtyle of architecture in the fifteenth century, when the arts began ſlowly to revive from their ſlumber of ſo many ages.

Charles the ſeventh is deſcribed by the French hiſtorians under colours ſimilar to thoſe, with which Pope in his notes on the Iliad has drawn the portrait of Paris. Naturally brave, munificent, amiable, protecting and cultivating all the elegant occupations of a liberal mind; but ſinking continually into an indolent effeminacy, and ſacrificing every grand or patriotic ſentiment to the faſcinating charms of female beauty.—The caſtle of Mehun

hun appears never to have been the favourite residence of any succeeding king of France, after the death of Charles. It was neglected by the immediate successors of that prince, lost in the superior lustre of Fontainbleau and Chambord under Francis the first, and ultimately alienated by Louis the fourteenth, to support his ruinous and expensive wars in the last century.

I pursued my journey through the provinces of Berri and Sologne to Orleans, where I arrived the ensuing day. The entrance into it is noble and striking from the south, over a fine bridge across the Loire of nine arches. The city itself is in general very meanly built, and the streets narrow, one only excepted, which leads from the bridge, and is composed of modern, elegant buildings. In this street stands the celebrated monument where Charles the seventh and the Maid of Orleans are represented on their knees before the body of our Saviour, who lies extended on the lap of the Virgin. It was erected by order of that monarch in 1458, to perpetuate his victories over the English, and their expulsion from his dominions. All the figures

are

are in iron. The king appears bareheaded, and by him lies his helmet ſurmounted with a crown. Oppoſite to him is the Maid herſelf, in the ſame attitude of grateful devotion to Heaven. It is a moſt precious and invaluable hiſtorical monument.

In the "Hotel de Ville" is a portrait of the ſame immortal woman, which I ſtudied long and attentively. Tho' it was not done till 1581, which was near 130 years after her deceaſe, it is yet the oldeſt original picture of her now exiſting. The painter ſeems undoubtedly to have drawn a flattering reſemblance of her, and to have given his heroine imaginary charms. Her face, tho' long, is of exceeding beauty, heighten'd by an expreſſion of intelligence and grandeur rarely united. Her hair falls looſely down her back, and ſhe wears on her head a ſort of bonnet enriched with pearls, and ſhaded with white plumes, tied under her chin with a ſtring. About her neck is a little collar, and lower down, upon her boſom, a necklace compoſed of ſmall links. Her dreſs, which is that of a woman, I find it difficult exactly to deſcribe. It fits cloſe to the body, and is cut or ſlaſhed

at

at the arms and elbows. Round her waiſt is an embroidered girdle, and in her right hand ſhe holds the ſword with which ſhe expelled the enemies of her ſovereign, and her country. I am not ſurpriz'd at the animated and enthuſiaſtic attachment which the French ſtill cheriſh for her memory. The critical and deſperate emergency in which ſhe appeared; her ſex, youth, and even the obſcurity of her birth; the unparallel'd ſucceſs which crowned her enterprize; the cruel and deteſtable ſentence by which ſhe was put to death; the air of the marvellous ſpread over the whole narration, encreaſed and ſtrengthened by that veneration which time affixes to every great event—all theſe united cauſes conſpire to place her above mortality. Rome and Athens would undoubtedly have ranked her among their tutelary deities, and have erected temples to her honour; nor can I help being amazed that amidſt the almoſt infinite number of modern ſaints who croud and diſgrace their churches, no altar has yet been dedicated to the Maid of Orleans.

The environs of Orleans, more eſpecially in the province of Sologne to the ſouth of the

the Loire, are very agreeable. It is in general a level country covered with corn and vines. I rode out during my ſtay there to "La Source," a villa rendered celebrated by the abode of Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, who paſſed the chief part of his exile in this retreat. Near the houſe, in a hollow dell, is the ſpring from which the place has received its name, and which may be regarded as a moſt extraordinary phænomenon. The water riſes out of the earth from a very narrow aperture in a prodigious column, and forms immediately a conſiderable river called the Loiret, which after winding its courſe about two leagues, is loſt in the Loire. Monſieur B—— to whom the place now belongs, has deformed and totally disfigured this beautiful fountain, by an ill-judged and miſtaken taſte. Inſtead of a dark and gloomy hollow ſhaded by deep woods, and adapted to the genius of the ſcene, in the midſt of which the ſpring formerly roſe with violence out of the earth, he has enlarged the opening from whence it iſſues; and it now only appears to bubble up ſcarce above the ſurface of the ground, in the middle of a ſhallow,

artificial

artificial bason. No trees of any kind conceal or shelter it from view, and after first passing through a narrow channel, it is dispersed in the form of a looking-glass before the house. One cannot view so ridiculous and absurd a metamorphosis, without the greatest regret, mixed with indignation.

I left Orleans on Sunday morning, and arrived here the same evening. Curiosity to visit the tomb of Louis the eleventh, who is interred at "Notre Dame de Clery," induced me to take the road through that place, tho' less direct. I passed the bridge of St. Mesmin, memorable for the assassination of Francis duke of Guise, with Brantome in my hand, and attempted, from his minute and exact description, to ascertain the precise spot where that illustrious prince was killed by Meré Poltrot, during the civil wars of France under Charles the ninth.

The church of Clery was built by Louis the eleventh, who had always a singular and capricious devotion for the Virgin Mary, to whom it is dedicated. He always denominated her "Ma bonne notre Dame de "Clery." From a similar superstition, he ordered

ordered his body to be interred there, under a monument, which he had himſelf erected. The Hugonots, in the civil wars under Catherine of Medicis, broke open his tomb, and ſcattered the bones about the church with a ſavage ferocity. Louis the thirteenth cauſed the preſent monument to be conſtructed in 1622, which is compoſed of white marble, and well executed. The king is on his knees, in an attitude of prayer, his hands raiſed to heaven. His queen, Charlotte of Savoy, was originally buried in the ſame tomb, and Charles the eighth cauſed his own heart to be depoſited there near his father's remains.

I croſſed the Loire again at Beaugency, and ſpent the whole afternoon in the gardens and groves of Menars. This was the ſeat of the celebrated Madame de Pompadour, who began to improve the place, and bequeathed it at her death to the Marquis de Marigny her only brother. The ſituation, which is on a high range of hills overhanging the Loire, is of unparallel'd beauty; and the eye is continually entertained on every ſide with a proſpect the moſt extenſive, delicious, and cultivated. Towns and palaces and caſtles,

intermixed with forefts, hamlets, abbeys and vineyards, are fpread below, while a noble river pouring through the plain, diffufes plenty and fertility in its progrefs. The gardens themfelves are laid out with great elegance, and adorned with a number of ftatues, chiefly prefented to the Marquis by his late Majefty, Louis the fifteenth. A "Pafiphaë," lamenting Phaeton, and beginning to take root, detained me for fome minutes; but I left this figure to obferve an "Atlas," than which nothing can be more perfect. The ftatue is larger than the life, and as Atlas is in the act of attempting to tear himfelf from the rock into which he is about to be transformed, all his mufcles are neceffarily in the moft violent ftate of exertion. The artift has found means to give a fort of fuction to the ftone, which makes it appear to draw in the limbs of Atlas, and in fome parts to have taken poffeffion of them. It is a mafterly production of fculpture. Monfieur de Marigny has prodigioufly improved the place fince the Marchionefs of Pompadour's deceafe. The terrace does not yield to that of Windfor or of St. Germain; and the woods, through which winds

a mur-

a murmuring rivulet, are of the moſt ſecluded ſolitude. In the midſt of them, concealed under a thick cover of trees, appears a Cupid, who ſeems as if juſt alighted on a pedeſtal covered with roſes. Nothing can exceed the archneſs of his looks, which make one tremble;—but he has his finger on his lips.

To-morrow you ſhall hear more. I am fatigued, but it is the fatigue of pleaſure.

Blois, Wednefday, 15th May, 1776.

IT is impoffible for any perfon to be defti-tute of fome emotions of pleafure, at the view of a place fo renowned in hiftory, as the city from which I write. Judge then what I experience, who cannot behold the fpot where any great atchievement has been per-formed in ages paft without the livelieft en-thufiafm, when I look upon the caftle, where Louis the twelfth, the father of his people was born; in which were folemnifed the nuptials of Margaret of Valois, fifter of Francis the firft, and of the fecond Margaret, wife of Henry the fourth! where Ifabella of Bavaria, and Mary of Medicis queens of France, were imprifoned! within whofe walls the duke and the cardinal of Guife were facrificed to the vengeance of Henry the third! where Valentina of Milan, where Anne of Bretagne, and Claude her daughter died; and to clofe this auguft feries of princes, where Catherine of Medicis fo renowned for her genius and her crimes, likewife expired!—I tread with reve-rence over the ground, render'd in fome de-

gree

gree ſacred, and view with a ſolemn delight the towers once inhabited by Queens and monarchs, now tending to decay, or covered with ivy, which ſpreads a twilight through the apartments at noon-day. An air of melancholy and departed greatneſs is ſtrongly diffuſed through the whole palace, and encreaſed by the ſilence which reigns univerſally. The cyphers and devices of ſucceeding princes are faintly diſcerned on the front of the edifice, or over the gateways. I diſtinguiſh the "Porcupine" of Louis the twelfth, the "Salamander" of Francis the firſt, and the amorous "Creſcent" of his ſon Henry the ſecond. I trace the remains of the gallery conſtructed by Henry the fourth, and wander in the avenue of elms planted by Catherine of Medicis; or ſurvey with regret the ſuperb and unfiniſhed palace of Gaſton duke of Orleans.——You muſt pardon theſe unconnected exclamations, which have eſcaped me in ſpite of myſelf. I will now endeavour to give you ſome more methodical and intelligible deſcription of the place.

The caſtle of Blois ſtands on a rock immediately above the Loire, and commands a view,

view hardly, if at all inferior to that ſeen from Menars. The ancient Counts of Blois held their conſtant reſidence here, and conſtructed the original caſtle, of which no remains now ſubſiſt, except one large round tower. Guy, the laſt Count of the houſe of Chatillon ſold it to Louis Duke of Orleans, brother to Charles the ſixth of France, and who was afterwards murdered in the "Rue Barbette" at Paris, in 1407; from whom it deſcended to Louis the twelfth, his grandſon. The eaſtern and ſouthern ſides, as they now ſubſiſt, were built by that king, and over the grand gateway is an equeſtrian ſtatue of him, habited in a coat of mail. The ſtyle of architecture merits great attention; and ſome of the figures which ſupport the windows, are of a nature ſo very indecent, that in the ſtate of refinement to which modern manners have attained, it excites our ſurprize how a prince ſo virtuous as Louis the twelfth is repreſented to have been, or a queen ſo rigid and ſo reſerved in her manners as was Anne of Bretagne, could ever have permitted them to be placed in the moſt conſpicuous part of a royal palace. It is a ſtriking proof of the groſs and unpoliſhed manners of the ſixteenth century.

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The northern front of the caſtle was built by Francis the firſt, ſoon after his acceſſion to the throne of France. A more ſplendid ſtyle, a workmanſhip approaching in delicacy and elegance to the Greek and Roman architecture, diſcriminates it from the former, and we evidently trace the advancement in the arts made by a more refined and liberal age. The apartments are all ſpacious and magnificent, tho' now diſmantled and neglected. I was ſhewn the celebrated chamber in which Henry duke of Guiſe was aſſaſſinated in 1588, by order of Henry the third. The ſtones which were tinged with his blood, have been almoſt ſcraped away by the curioſity of ſucceſſive travellers. At the weſtern extremity of the building is the tower of Chateau-Regnaud, famous for having been the ſcene of the murder of the Cardinal of Guiſe. I went down into the dungeon where that ambitious and unfortunate prelate paſſed the night previous to his execution, with his companion, the Archbiſhop of Lyons. Two doors of maſſy iron open into a gloomy chamber, vaulted, and into which the light is only admitted by

one ſmall window cloſed with iron bars. The figure of the room is irregular, and may be about twenty feet in diameter. In the middle is a round hole ſufficiently large to receive the body of a man, and under it are three ranges of dungeons, one beneath the other. The Cardinal himſelf was put to death in a ſort of receſs hollowed into the wall, on the day following that of his brother the Duke of Guiſe. The guards executed the order with their halberds.—— They both periſhed the juſt martyrs of their inordinate ambition; and this aſſaſſination is, I believe, the only one mentioned in hiſtory, for which, if poſſible, the circumſtances ſeem almoſt to plead a full exculpation.

At the eaſtern termination of the northern front is the "Salle des Etats," where Henry the third aſſembled the ſtates twice during his diſtracted reign. It is a vaſt hall, now diſuſed and almoſt in ruins. In the chimney, the bodies of the Duke and Cardinal of Guiſe, after their aſſaſſination, are ſaid to have been conſumed to aſhes. You will perhaps recollect the animated apoſtrophe of their mother

the Duchefs of Guife, to the ftatue of Louis the twelfth, on receiving the news of the death of her two children. She was daughter to Renee of Ferrara, and grand-daughter to that monarch. Henry the third fent her a captive to Amboife, after the execution of her fons. Having embarked upon the Loire, fhe turned towards the caftle of Blois, and invoking with lifted arms the fhade of her royal anceftor, whofe ftatue was over the portal, " Ah ! grand Roi," exclaimed fhe, " avez vous fait batir ce Chateau, pour y " faire mourir les enfans de votre petite " fille!"

The weftern front is the work of Gafton Duke of Orleans, fon of Henry the fourth, and brother to Louis the thirteenth. It is a beautiful and magnificent edifice, but was unhappily left incomplete by his death, in 1659. Manfard was the architect whom he employ'd in its conftruction; and more than three hundred thoufand livres were ufelefsly expended on this fumptuous building, which is uninhabitable and already far gone in decay. Gafton himfelf foretold the future ftate of incompletion and ruin in

which it would be left; and in that conviction exclaimed as he lay expiring, "Domus mea, "domus desolationis in eternum!" All the other designs and plans of alteration which he had begun, were laid aside at his decease.

The gardens of the castle which were formerly very extensive, are now converted into private property, and the superb gallery, which was constructed by Henry the fourth to divide the upper and lower gardens, is only to be traced in its ruins, as it was demolished about thirteen years ago by order of the court. The walk of Catherine of Medicis, however, still subsists; it is of a prodigious length, extending to the forest of Blois, and forming an avenue to the castle truly royal.

I went yesterday to visit Chambord, the famous palace of Francis the first, which is about four leagues from hence, on the southern side of the Loire. It stands in a low situation, surrounded by deep woods, and has all the appearance of one of Tasso's or Ariosto's enchanted castles, raised out of the earth by magic powers. The magnitude of the whole structure, together with the numerous turrets, pinnacles,

cles, domes, and towers, over which the lapſe of two centuries begins to throw an air of decay, and waning ſplendor, produce an effect on the beholder hard to be deſcribed. Thick foreſts ſurround it on all ſides, and in the front flows or rather ſtagnates a little river called the Couſſon, black, and full of ſedges. The palace, conformable to the taſte of the age in which it was built, is moated round; but the architecture of it, tho' ſtrictly Gothic, is full of beauty, and elegance. A grand ſtair-caſe in the center of the building, leads to the different ranges of apartments; and by a ſingular contrivance it is rendered double, ſo that two perſons may aſcend or deſcend at the ſame time without ever ſeeing or meeting each other. Tho' I cannot pretend to explain, or give you an exact idea how this effect is produced, yet it is curious and unique in its kind.

The chambers, tho' now unfurniſhed, and beginning to feel the injurious effects of time, are ſtill extremely magnificent. Thoſe which were occupied by the late Marechal Saxe, are not entirely without furniture, and have

been in ſome degree modernized. In many of them beams are ſtretched acroſs to ſupport the cielings, which exceedingly deform the appearance of the rooms. Catherine of Medicis who had been informed by an aſtrologer, that ſhe was in danger of being cruſhed under the ruins of a houſe, cauſed them to be placed in this manner, to ſecure her from the fatal conſequences of the prediction.

I enquired much after the pane of glaſs, on which were formerly ſeen the two lines written with a diamond, by the hand of Francis the firſt. They were in a little cloſet communicating with the chapel, but are now loſt by ſome accident. They were theſe:

"Toute Femme varie.
"Mal habil qui s'y fie!"—

Some vexation, cauſed by his miſtreſs's caprice or inconſtancy, probably gave occaſion to this ſevere ſarcaſm on the ſex.

Immenſe ſums of money were expended by Francis the firſt in the conſtruction of Chambord, and eighteen hundred workmen were employed during twelve years in its completion.

pletion. There are ſaid to be twelve hundred large, and four hundred ſmaller apartments in the palace. Francis entertained the Emperor Charles the fifth there, with his accuſtom'd magnificence and ſplendour, during the viſit which that prince paid him on the rebellion of the Gantois, in 1540. Henry the ſecond made ſome additions to the palace. His father's device, a "Salamander in the flames" is ſeen in almoſt every part of the building; and on one ſmall tower only, I diſcover'd thoſe of Henry himſelf, a "creſcent, "with the letter H."

After having ſtayed more than three hours in the different galleries or apartments, I ſat down on the bank of the rivulet in front of the palace, to contemplate it at leiſure. I ſpread my cold proviſions on the graſs, under the ſhade of two ancient elms, and after having dined, reſigned myſelf to all that train of reflection naturally excited by the view of ſo magnificent a ſtructure.

Since the deceaſe of Marechal Saxe, Chambord is going faſt to decay. Louis the fourteenth made ſeveral viſits to it, to enjoy the

pleaſure of hunting, but his ſucceſſor, the late king, totally neglected it, and many hundred thouſand livres muſt now be expended on the palace, before it could be rendered fit to lodge and receive a ſovereign. Its immenſe magnitude, which makes it require continual repairs, will neceſſarily haſten its downfall, and motives of œconomy will probably produce in ſome future time its entire demolition.

The city of Blois is meanly built, and many of the houſes are of equal antiquity with the caſtle itſelf. It lies on the declivity of the hill along the northern bank of the river, and is joined to a conſiderable ſuburb on the oppoſite ſide of the Loire, by a modern bridge. No language can deſcribe the beauty of the Loire, or the fertility of the country through which it flows. The extreme poverty and miſery of the peaſants, in the midſt of a delicious paradiſe, producing in the greateſt abundance all the neceſſaries and elegancies of life, impreſſes me with pity, wonder and indignation. I ſee much magnificence, but ſtill more diſtreſs; one princely Chateau, ſurrounded with a thouſand wretched ham-

lets; the moſt ſtudied and enervate luxury among the higher orders of ſociety, contraſted with beggary and nakedneſs among the people; a gaiety, a ſoftneſs, and an urbanity, univerſally characteriſtic of every rank, and to which it is impoſſible to refuſe attachment and admiration.

To-morrow morning I continue my progreſs ſlowly along the Loire.

Tours, Tuesday, 21st of May, 1776.

THE road from Blois to this city is one of the most agreeable in France, and lies along the bank of the river Loire. Hills, whose sides are covered with vines, forests, among which appear spires and villas; or wide plains cultivated with the greatest industry, continually diversify and enliven the scene.

I stop'd during more than two hours to view the castle of Chaumont. It is built on a high point of land about five leagues below Blois, on the southern bank of the Loire, and commanding a most extensive prospect. The pile is Gothic, and was constructed about the middle of the fifteenth century by the Lords of the house of Amboise. The Cardinal of that name, the virtuous and incorrupt minister of Louis the twelfth, was himself born there, and the devices of his family are yet distinctly to be traced on the great towers of the castle. They consist of two letters interwoven, and under them, a volcano; this conceit,

conceit, by a ſort of pun which in that age was much admir'd, formed the word "Chau-"Mont." Henry the ſecond made a preſent of the caſtle to his miſtreſs Diana de Poitiers, ducheſs of Valentinois, ſo celebrated in the annals of France. She improved and enlarg'd it very conſiderably, and the "hunting horn," one of her emblems, appears in many parts of the building. On the death of her royal lover in 1559, Catherine of Medicis, who had long envied her the poſſeſſion of Chaumont, rather compelled than requeſted the ducheſs to renounce it in her favour; but by an act of generoſity becoming a queen, ſhe preſented Diana in return, the palace of Chenonceaux-ſur-Cher. Soon after the death of Catherine, Chaumont fell into the hands of the Viſcount de Sardini, a Lucqueſe nobleman who had married a lady of the houſe of Limeüil, diſtantly allied to that princeſs by blood. His deſcendants are now extinct.——Exactly oppoſite to it, and about a mile diſtant from the Loire, ſtands the caſtle of Onzain, in which Louis prince of Conde, who was afterwards killed at Jarnac in 1569, was impriſoned by

Catherine of Medicis after the battle of Dreux, and during the ſubſequent ſiege of Orleans.

I arrived at Amboiſe the ſame evening. The town is mean and ill built, but has been rendered famous in hiſtory by the conſpiracy of the proteſtants in 1560, which opened the fatal wars of religion in France. The caſtle is ſituated on a craggy rock, extremely difficult of acceſs, and the ſides of which are almoſt perpendicular. At its foot flows the Loire, which is divided into two ſtreams by a ſmall iſland. I am not ſurprized that the duke of Guiſe, when he expected an inſurrection among the Hugonots, choſe to remove Francis the ſecond to this fortreſs, as to a place of perfect ſecurity. Only two detached parts of the ancient caſtle now remain, one of which was conſtructed by Charles the eighth, and the other by Francis the firſt. It is perhaps unneceſſary to remind you that the former of thoſe princes was born and died at Amboiſe. From the hill behind the caſtle, is ſeen another of thoſe enchanting landſcapes, which theſe provinces of France continually exhibit,

exhibit, and where the eye is delighted with a profuſion of natural beauties.

I went the enſuing day to Chanteloup, the palace of the Duke de Choiſeul, about a mile from Amboiſe. Neither the ſituation nor the expoſition are, in my opinion, happy ones. The proſpect which it commands, is very limited, and the Loire, altho' at ſo inconſiderable a diſtance, is ſcarcely ſeen even from the upper apartments. The rooms which I was allow'd to view, tho' ſplendid, were equally deſtitute of any production of painting or of ſculpture; and fell far ſhort of the magnificent ideas which I had been taught to preconceive of Chanteloup. The Duke has notwithſtanding ſpent immenſe ſums on this palace, and is at preſent employed in conſtructing additional chambers, which will ſurpaſs all thoſe already finiſhed, in grandeur and elegance.

I continued my journey to this city. Tours is built in a fine plain on the ſouthern bank of the Loire. The ſurrounding country ſurpaſſes in fertility even all I have yet ſeen, and every eminence within ſeveral miles of the place is occupied either by convents

or villas. Among the former, is the celebrated monaſtery of Marmoutier, from whence Iſabella of Bavaria, queen of Charles the ſixth, was carried off in 1417, by John "Sans "Peur" duke of Burgundy.

I made an excurſion yeſterday to Loches, which is ten leagues diſtant from this place, through a delicious plain watered by the Cher, the Indre, and a number of rivulets that fertilize the meadows among which they wind their courſe. The caſtle of Loches is very famous in the hiſtory of France, and was in former ages the uſual place of confinement for priſoners of the higheſt quality. Its origin remounts to the moſt remote antiquity, nor is there any tradition which pretends to aſcertain the name of its founder, or the time of its conſtruction. It has been enlarged, rebuilt and fortified by ſucceſſive ſovereigns. Charles the ſeventh frequently held his court and reſidence there during the former part of his reign; and René, duke of Alençon, one of the princes of the blood royal, was long detained there a priſoner by that monarch's order, on account of his treaſonable practices, for the introduction of the Engliſh into the kingdom.

kingdom.——In one of the apartments is the iron cage, in which Louis the eleventh confined the Cardinal de la Balue more than nine years. This inhuman engine of punishment is not above eleven feet square. The Cardinal was at length released in 1481, at the intercession of the reigning pope, during the long state of weakness and debility which preceded the king's decease.

I went to view the chamber where the perfidious Ludovico Sforza the Moor, duke of Milan, was imprisoned by Louis the twelfth, from the year 1500 to 1510. It is a large apartment, vaulted, and in that age, was not improper for the confinement of a sovereign prince. Only one window, secured by three gratings of iron, admits light into the room, and in the midst of summer the rays of the sun enter through this opening, about the hour of noon, for a few minutes. On the wall, exactly opposite to the window, are distinctly to be traced the remains of a dial or meridian, upon which the beams of the sun darted; and which, as constant tradition relates, was cut by the hand of Sforza to amuse himself in his

hours

hours of ſolitude. Over the chimney is the figure of a head ſuppoſed to be his, and cover'd with a helmet. The walls and roof are likewiſe covered with characters and inſcriptions now rendered illegible by the lapſe of time.

I quitted this chamber, and deſcended with my guide by the light of a torch into the "Oubliettes," or ſubterranean dungeons. They are Labyrinths hollowed into the earth, of a vaſt extent and totally deſtitute of light. The air itſelf was ſo moiſt and unwholeſome, that it almoſt extinguiſhed the flambeau. The man who attended me, made me remark circular holes in many places of the incumbent rock, through which they let down the wretched victims deſtined to periſh in theſe caverns. Doors of maſſy iron cloſed up the entrance, and prevented all poſſibility of ſuccour or eſcape. I was glad to leave theſe diſmal abodes of darkneſs and horror, to reviſit the chearful day.——The greater part of the caſtle of Loches is now in ruins; but it is notwithſtanding ſtill uſed for the confinement of perſons accuſed of crimes of ſtate; and there is at preſent a gentleman there, the cauſe of

whoſe

whoſe impriſonment is not known, who has been immur'd more than three years.

In the principal church of Loches, before the high altar, is interr'd the celebrated Agnes Soreille, miſtreſs to Charles the ſeventh, who died in 1449. The monument is compoſed of black marble, and on it are her effigies executed in white alabaſter. If the figure may be ſuppoſed to have reſembled her perſon, ſhe was feminine and delicate to the utmoſt degree of which the human body is ſuſceptible. The face is perfectly correſpondent to the other parts, and conveys an idea of uncommon lovelineſs mixed with exquiſite fragility. Her hands which are joined in the act of prayer, are models of ſymmetry and proportion. Round her head is tied a broad fillet ſtudded with pearls, and a ſort of necklace compoſed of the ſame ornaments falls on her boſom. She lies upon an embroider'd cuſhion; her dreſs is ſimple and modeſt, concealing her limbs from view, and at her feet are placed two lambs emblematical of her name, Agnes. Time has begun to injure and deface the figure and the tomb in many parts. I looked at it with

with extreme ſatisfaction during ſome minutes, nor was it merely the recollection of the perſonal charms ſhe once poſſeſſed, that detained and affected me:—the magnanimity which actuated her conduct, and which ſhe infuſed into her lover, when ſinking under the ſuperiour power of his enemies, render her memory deſervedly dear to every feeling mind; nor, among the many favourites of princes whoſe names hiſtory has preſerved, does any one appear to have been more worthy of a monarch's attachment, and a nation's love, than was Agnes Soreille. You will recollect, I doubt not, the verſes of Francis the firſt in her honour, which particularly allude to her efforts to inſpire Charles the ſeventh with fortitude and courage againſt the Engliſh, the invaders of his dominions.——A thouſand fables reſpecting her, are yet preſerved among the inhabitants of Loches; her beauty, her liberality, and her power over the king form the principal ſubjects of theſe traditions. I liſtened to them all with extreme pleaſure; and afterwards went to look at the tower, which is called "La Tour de la belle Agnes," and in which,

as my conductor assured me with great simplicity, Charles used, from motives of jealousy, to confine her when he went to the chace. ——It is certain that she resided frequently at Beaulieu, a little town only divided from Loches by the river Indre, and where are still seen the remains of a Chateau which belonged to her. As she died at the abbey of Jumieges in Normandy, her body was brought by her express command to this church, to which in her life-time she had made very ample donations. Louis the eleventh, tho' he neither honour'd his father's memory, nor respected Agnes, to whom it is pretended he once gave a blow at Chinon in Touraine, yet protected her remains, and rejected the petition of the canons of the church, who by an act of ingratitude to their benefactress had requested that her tomb might be removed and demolished.

I had always read and been informed, that Ludovico Sforza, the duke of Milan, was likewise buried in the chancel of the same church of Loches, under a plate of copper. All the French writers—even their best historians

aſſert it as an inconteſtible fact.—There is notwithſtanding nothing more falſe, and it is one of thoſe many errors which have been ſanctified by long preſcription. The plate of copper indeed exiſts; but one of the prieſts obligingly read to me the inſcription upon it, which is to the memory of a private family. A portrait of a warrior kneeling and in prayer, which has been always ſhewn as Sforza's figure, the ſame perſon aſſured me is that of the duke of Epernon.—No traces of any ſuch interment are to be found among the records of the church, tho' the account of that of Agnes Soreille, anterior by ſixty years, yet exiſts.——I muſt own this contradiction to ſo received an opinion may appear extraordinary;—but how many ſuppoſed facts of hiſtory might be found to depend upon as erroneous a foundation!

I am juſt returned from the caſtle of Pleſſez-les-Tours, ſo famous for having been the ſcene of the illneſs and death of Louis the eleventh, in 1483. Do you remember Philip de Comines' minute and terrifying picture of that event?—I felt a ſecret horror as I entered the court,

and

and ſurvey'd the walls once covered with iron ſpikes, where a continual guard kept watch during the laſt, ſad hours of the guilty and expiring monarch. Pleſſez is ſituated only half a league from this city, in a plain ſurrounded by woods, at a little diſtance from the Loire. The building is yet handſome, tho' only compos'd of brick, and now converted to purpoſes of commerce. In the chapel, on the right hand of the high altar, is a maſterly and beautiful portrait of Louis the eleventh himſelf, dreſſed in complete armour. Within his left arm, which lies on his breaſt, is a ſtandard, and with his right hand he takes off his helmet, in the act of ſalutation to the Virgin Mary and her infant. His harſh and unpleaſing features are ſoftened into a ſmile of pleaſure and complacency. He ſeems to extend his left hand towards the child, whoſe eye is fix'd on his with eagerneſs. Theſe indications of tenderneſs have given room to ſuppoſe, that by the figures of Mary and of our Saviour, are deſigned Charlotte of Savoy his queen, and Charles the eighth his ſon. Her habit, which is royal,

the diadem on her head, and more than all, a resemblance between the infant and the king which is very ſtriking, ſtrongly confirm this ſuppoſition.

Tho' Tours is at preſent an unpleaſant and ill built place, it will probably be greatly changed in a few years. A very noble bridge of fifteen arches is already built acroſs the river, and a ſtreet is planned which will interſect the whole city. Theſe alterations will tend much to its embelliſhment.

My journey begins now to draw towards an end, but you may yet hear once or twice from Yours, &c.

Mans, Tuefday, 28th of May, 1776.

IT is with regret that I find myfelf at a diftance from the banks of the Loire, along which I have wander'd with fo fenfible a pleafure. The beauty of the country on either fide, the number of magnificent edifices reflected in its furface, the folemn majefty of its courfe, at one time, amidft iflands, woods, and delicious plains, and at others, under high and hanging rocks, confpire to awaken at this enchanting feafon, fentiments of extreme delight.

At Langeais about feven leagues from Tours, I ftop'd to examine the remains of the caftle, which are yet noble, tho' decayed and in ruins. It is rendered celebrated in hiftory by the nuptials of Anne of Bretagne with Charles the eighth, which were folemnized there in 1488. I arrived at the city of Saumur the fame evening. You may imagine that I could not be within five leagues of the abbey of Fontevrauld, where Henry the fecond and Richard the firft of

of England are interred, without a desire to visit the place. It is situated in a valley near the confines of Anjou, on the side of Touraine. Rocky hills rise behind it, and thick woods conceal it almost entirely from view. An air of melancholy and silence reigns on all sides, peculiarly characteristic of, and suitable to the gloomy devotion of monastic life. As I walked under the high and venerable rows of elms in the gardens of the convent, it was impossible for me not to feel in some degree those awful sensations which are naturally inspired by these religious solitudes.—The abbey was founded in the year 1096, by Robert d'Arbrissel. Its reputation for sanctity, and its vicinity to Chinon, at which city Henry the second died, were probably the causes of his being interred at Fontevrauld, as none of his progenitors the Counts of Anjou had chosen it for their place of burial. You may perhaps remember that sentiments of penitence and contrition for his filial disobedience, induced Richard the first to order in his dying moments, that his body should be laid at the feet of his father, Henry.

Eleanor

Eleanor of Aquitain, wife of the one and mother of the other prince, lies buried in the same tomb; as do likewife Jane Queen of Sicily and countefs of Provence, daughter to Henry the fecond; and Elizabeth of Angoulefme, widow to John King of England.— The figures of all thefe fovereigns are carved in ftone upon the monument itfelf; but as that is enclofed within the grate, in the part of the choir where the Abbefs and Nuns affemble for public devotion, no intereft or intreaties could poffibly procure me admittance into this facred enclofure; and I was confequently prevented from obferving it with that minutenefs and attention which I could have wifh'd. Four folemn Requiems and fervices are faid every year for the repofe of the fouls of thefe princes, and the tomb was repaired and beautified in the year 1638, by order of the reigning Abbefs.

Fontevrauld, befides the refpect derived from it's antiquity, has been ever confidered as one of the moft honourable and important ecclefiaftical benefices in France. Many princeffes of the blood have fucceffively governed it, and

the revenues are immenſe. The number of religious of both ſexes under the Abbeſs's direction, amount to more than two hundred, and her authority both temporal and ſpiritual is very extenſive.

I returned to Saumur the ſame evening, and left it again laſt Saturday. The town is ſmall, but pleaſantly ſituated on the Loire, acroſs which is a long bridge, continued through a number of iſlands. Saumur was anciently a moſt important paſs over the river, and of conſequence was frequently and fiercely diſputed by either party, during the civil wars of France in the ſixteenth century. The fortifications are of great ſtrength, and Henry the fourth, on the reconciliation which took place between him and Henry the third near Tours in 1589, demanded that Saumur ſhould be delivered to him, as one of the cities of ſafety. The caſtle overlooks the town and river. It is built on a lofty eminence, and has a venerable and magnificent appearance, tho' now only uſed as a priſon of ſtate, where perſons of rank are frequently confined. The Kings of Sicily and Dukes of Anjou of

the

the houſe of Valois, who deſcended from John King of France, often reſided in the caſtle of Saumur, as it conſtituted a part of their Angevin dominions.

The diſtance from Saumur to Angers is about thirteen leagues, and the greater part of the road lies along the banks of the Loire. Anjou appears to me not to yield in fertility or beauty to any province of the kingdom. Wines of the moſt delicious and exquiſite flavour are produced in it, among which that of Champigny, a little village near Fontevrauld, is particularly admir'd.—I made a ſtay of two days in Angers. The city ſtands in a plain, and is divided into "La haute" and "La baſſe ville" by the river Mayenne, which winds thro' meadows, and falls into the Loire five miles below the place. The caſtle was built by St. Louis, about the middle of the thirteenth century. The walls, foſſes, and numerous towers which yet ſubſiſt, evince its former magnificence; and its ſituation in the center of the city, on a rock overhanging the river, conduces to give it an air of grandeur, tho' at preſent in decay. It

was the principal refidence of the Kings of Sicily, as Dukes of Anjou, but is now in a ftate of total ruin. The cathedral of Angers is a venerable ftructure, and altho' it has undergone many alterations in the courfe of ages fince its conftruction, yet the architecture is fingular and deferves attention. Here lies interred with her anceftors the renown'd Margaret, daughter of René King of Sicily, and Queen of Henry the fixth of England. She expired, after her many intrepid, but ineffectual efforts to replace her hufband on the throne, in the year 1482, at the caftle of Dampierre in Anjou. The Englifh hiftorians feem never to have paid any attention to this illuftrious Princefs in her retirement and obfcurity, after Louis the eleventh of France had ranfom'd her from Edward the fourth, and procured her releafe from the Tower of London. She was the favourite child of René, who folemnly renounced in favour of the king of France, all his claims on the province of Anjou and the duchy of Lorrain, to obtain her freedom. In his court, and under his protection, fhe remained at Aix in Provence, the ufual

place

place of that Prince's refidence, 'till his death obliged her to return into the Angevin territories. She was there receiv'd by a gentleman nam'd Vignole, who had been long in her father's fervice, and who afforded her an afylum. Henry Earl of Richmond, who was afterwards victorious at Bofworth, and who was then a fugitive in Bretagne, went from Vannes to vifit her, and afk her advice. She ftrongly urged him to his attempt againft the houfe of York, which then reigned in England, tho' fhe did not furvive to be a witnefs of his fuccefs againft Richard the third. No remains of that commanding beauty, which fhe had once poffeffed, accompanied her in the decline of life. A French writer has drawn the portrait of Margaret when near her end; and it impreffes both with horror and compaffion. You will not recognize the Queen defcrib'd by our hiftorians in fuch animated language, and with fuch flattering colours.——" Son fang corrumpu " par tant de noires agitations, devint comme " une poifon qui infecta toutes les parties " qu'il devoit nourrir; fa peau fecha jufqu' à

" s'en aller en poussiere; son estomac se re-
" trecit, et ses yeux aussi creux que s'ils
" eussent été enfoncés avec violence, perdi-
" rent tout le feu qui avoit servi si long temps
" d'interprete aux grands sentimens de son
" ame."

Angers is of a very considerable size, but the buildings and streets are almost as mean and as old as those of Bourges. The walls with which John king of England surrounded it in 1214, remain nearly entire, and are of a very large circumference.

I slept last night at La Fleche, a pretty town on the confines of Anjou. In the church which belong'd to the Jesuits, are the hearts of Henry the fourth and Mary of Medicis, which were deposited there by the express command of those princes. I entered the province of Maine this morning. It is ten leagues from La Fleche to Mans, through a country much enclosed and finely wooded. ——The situation of this city is very pleasant, near the junction of two little rivers which wind through a delicious plain. I went to the top of the cathedral, to enjoy one of the finest

finest inland prospects to be imagined. Towards Normandy and Perche it is lost in clouds at a great distance, and on the side of Bretagne extends the forest of Mans, the scene of that extraordinary phantom which is said to have appeared to Charles the sixth of France, and which was a principal cause of his consequent insanity. The city of Mans is small, but preferable to Angers in elegance and regularity. It formerly constituted, together with the province of which it is the capital, a part of our Henry the second's hereditary dominions, which he added to those devolved to him at king Stephen's death, in right of his mother Matilda. In the year 1216 Philip Augustus reconquered Maine from John, and annex'd the province to the crown of France.

I shall continue my journey in the evening to Alençon. Adieu!

Rouen, Monday, 3d June, 1776.

IT was already late when I left Mans, and as Alençon is twelve leagues diſtant, I was obliged to ſtop at a little town named "Beaumont-Le-Viſcomte," ſituated near the confines of Maine and Normandy, on the ſide of a ſteep hill, at the foot of which runs a rivulet, and from whence a delicious landſcape is ſeen on all ſides, richly cultivated. I got to Alençon the enſuing morning. The place is of conſiderable ſize, waſhed by the little river Sarte, and ſtands in the midſt of an extenſive plain. I ſlept at Seez, an ancient city, and continued my route next day to L'Aigle, a ſmall town, but well known in hiſtory by its caſtle, tho' ſcarce any traces of it now remain. Our annals inform us that William the Conqueror frequently reſided there in his viſits to theſe his hereditary dominions; and Charles d'Eſpagne de la Cerda, Conſtable of France in the reign of John, was ſurpriz'd and murder'd at L'Aigle in the year 1354, by Charles the Bad, King of Navarre.

I croſſed

I croſſed a conſiderable part of Normandy to the city of Evreux, which is ſituated in a deep vale ſurrounded with lofty hills; and purſuing my journey, arrived here laſt Friday. Rouen is too well known and too frequently viſited, to render any long deſcription of it neceſſary. The Seine is beautiful both above and below the place, covered with little iſlands overgrown with wood, and running at the foot of a range of lofty mountains. Near its bank, at one extremity of the city, are yet ſeen the remains of the palace which Henry the fifth of England began in 1419, and which was compleated under his unfortunate ſon Henry the ſixth in 1443. At a ſmall diſtance from it is a tower, called "La Tour "de la Pucelle," in which John Duke of Bedford confined the Maid of Orleans previous to her trial. You will recollect her ſubſequent condemnation and death. A ſtatue is erected to her on the ſpot where this cruel ſentence was executed, and an inſcription engraven beneath it in her honour. Who would not die, to merit two of the lines which compoſe it?

——"Exuit

—"Exuit flammis quod mortale,
"Supereſt gloria nunquam moritura!"—

They exalt her above mortality, and inroll her to the moſt remote poſterity, with the great ſpirits who in different ages have ſacrificed their lives for their country. It is the higheſt tribute which man can pay to virtue.

I went yeſterday morning to viſit a little priory, called "Notre Dame de bonnes Nouvelles," ſituated on the ſouthern bank of the Seine, and which was founded by William the Conqueror previous to his ſucceſsful attempt on the Engliſh crown. It is ſaid that his wife Matilda being at her devotions in this church, intelligence arrived that the duke of Normandy had gained the important battle of Haſtings; and from this circumſtance it obtained the name which it retains at preſent. Matilda, daughter of Henry the firſt, and mother of Henry the ſecond, kings of England, was buried there; but ſix hundred years have totally eraſed the inſcription on her tomb, of which there are now no traces diſcernible. This princeſs, as being ducheſs of Normandy, reſided frequently at Rouen, and ſhe con-

ſtructed the ancient bridge acroſs the Seine, of which the ruins yet remain, tho' it began to fall as early as the year 1502, and became totally uſeleſs before the concluſion of the ſixteenth century.

The cathedral is one of the moſt magnificent monuments of Gothic architecture to be found in France. It was built under William the Conqueror's reign, and entirely compleated in 1063. I tread with reverence among the tombs of the numerous kings and princes who are interred in different parts of the edifice. Here lies Rollo the Dane, founder of the Norman line, deſtined to aſcend the Engliſh throne; a hero almoſt loſt in the barbariſm and diſtance of the times in which he flouriſh'd! Two of his deſcendants, Dukes of Normandy, are buried near him.—The heart of Richard the firſt King of England, which when dying he ordered to be depoſited in the cathedral of Rouen, is placed on the right hand of the high altar. It was originally preſerv'd in a ſhrine of maſſy ſilver; but during the extreme diſtreſs occaſioned by the want of money to defray the expences

expences of St. Louis's ranſom when taken priſoner at Damieta in Egypt, this ſplendid repoſitory was applied to the neceſſities of the ſtate. Prince Henry, the elder brother of Richard, who died at the caſtle of Martel in Quercy in 1183, lies buried on the oppoſite ſide. Near theſe, repoſes John Duke of Bedford; an illuſtrious name revered even by his enemies, and almoſt without a blemiſh, if he had not condemned to death the Maid of Orleans, the deliverer of her country. Behind the altar, under a monument of exquiſite workmanſhip, is interr'd the great Cardinal of Amboiſe, miniſter to Louis the twelfth, whoſe memory France will honour as long as patriotiſm and integrity are cheriſhed among men. He is repreſented on the tomb, kneeling and in prayer. I ſtood long to conſider the monument of Louis de Brezé, Senechal of Normandy and Count de Maulevrier, who died in 1531. The figure of the Count himſelf extended at full length, is one of the moſt maſterly and beautiful productions of the chiſſel. On one ſide is the Virgin Mary, and on the other appears his widow the cele-

brated

brated Diana de Poitiers, afterwards the favourite miſtreſs of Henry the ſecond. She looks down on the body of her huſband; grief is marked in her features, and her dreſs is that of a mourner. The whole monument is a model of beauty and delicacy of ſculpture.

Rouen, tho' large and enriched by commerce, is not an elegant city. The ſtreets are almoſt all narrow, crooked and dirty; the buildings old and irregular. It was fortified by St. Louis in 1253, but the walls are now demoliſhed. The environs, more peculiarly the hills which overlook the Seine, are wonderfully agreeable, and covered with magnificent villas.

My ſtay here will be very ſhort. I purpoſe to embark at Dieppe for England, and ſhall probably ſee you in a few days.—I have compleated the deſign which I laid down at my ſetting out, that of viſiting the unfrequented provinces of France. Throughout my whole tour I have ſtudiouſly endeavour'd to avoid the ground uſually trod by the Engliſh in their paſſage from Calais into Italy, as

being too well known to afford you any information. It only remains for me to claim your candour and indulgence; on that I rely, and remain

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c. &c.

NATH^L. WILL^M WRAXALL.

FINIS.